THE MERCHANT SEAMAN IN WAR

BY

L. COPE CORNFORD

WITH A FOREWORD BY

ADMIRAL SIR JOHN R. JELLICOE,

G.C.B., O.M., G.C.V.O.

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TO
THE MEMORY OF
BRAVE MEN

In the following narrative, in order to conform to the exigencies of war, it has been necessary to omit the names of persons and to give no more than a general indication of localities. These discretions will not, it is hoped, detract from the essential value of the record.

"BUT THE COMMON SORT COULD I NOT NUMBER NOR NAME, NAY, NOT IF TEN TONGUES WERE MINE AND TEN MOUTHS, AND A VOICE UNWEARIED, AND MY HEART OF BRONZE WITHIN ME . . ."—*Iliad* 2.

FOREWORD

We are passing through a crisis in the History of our Nation during which every individual is called upon to take some part. On every side there are evidences of devotion to duty, and much that is heroic and splendid is brought into prominence every day. In a conflict of so vast a scale, however, countless acts of gallantry must inevitably pass unrecorded and unknown; and unless I misjudge my fellow-countrymen, I believe their authors would not have it otherwise. Yet the part in this war which has been played by the officers and men of the British Mercantile Marine is such that some record is imperative. They have founded a new and a glorious tradition in the teeth of new and undreamed-of peril, and have borne the full brunt of the enemy's illegal submarine warfare. It is not only in their honour that I feel this book should go before the public, but also as a lesson to succeeding generations who will follow their paths in freedom on the seas.

J. R. Jellicoe.

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PREFATORY NOTE

The Way of the Sea

The complete history of the doings and the endurance of the officers and men of the Mercantile Marine during the war cannot yet be written; but by the courtesy of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty the present writer has been enabled to select a series of examples from the records of the first three years of war, which may serve to illustrate the whole matter. And the theme of the book is defined in the Foreword with which Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, in the midst of his many and great labours, has been so good as to endow the enterprise.

That enterprise is difficult enough; for the chronicler may do his best, and still he must rely upon the help of the reader. For whereas the artist in fiction can cause the persons of his story to express themselves in act and word, and can himself illumine the processes of their mind, according to the effect he desires to achieve, the narrator of history, dealing with contemporary persons and events, owns no such pleasant freedom. The chronicler can but evoke persons many of whom he has never seen, and reconstitute events which he has not witnessed, from out the official records, abstract like a proposition in Euclid, or from the accounts of the seamen themselves, who, with some exceptions, frame their style upon the model of the ship's log. And no wonder; for men who have endured a deadly ordeal take small pleasure in reviving the experience. Moreover, the circumstances in which the narrator tells his story are far from encouraging. Very often he has lost his ship, not in itself a gratifying event; very often, too,

he comes on shore after having oscillated, wet and starving, between life and death in an open boat, for days and nights. Sometimes he has been wounded, or he has witnessed the violent death of shipmates.

Thus the master, or the officer, or the seaman fetches up in the office of the appointed official, who, if sympathetic, is still an official, whose sole business it is to reduce a strange and a moving episode to an official form; upon which it is grimly transmuted into sworn evidence of a legal character.

Nevertheless, the official records own the invaluable quality of being true, or as near to truth as may be attained by man's fallible recording instrument of memory; and truth is of so strange a potency that it can even shine through a printed form of the Board of Trade.

But again, the truth fetters the historian; for he is bound by the reality of the chain of events; a chain which he dare not break in pursuit of the broader truth expounded by the artist in fiction. Visible nature knows nothing of the conventions of art, which, having impressed them upon the mind of man, nature leaves him to apply at his discretion. So that the historian must take episodes as they occur. It is not for him to clew up ragged ends.

And yet the historian, being in his humble way an artist too (inasmuch as he is making something out of something else), must still select from the mass of his material that which serves his purpose, to the exclusion of other matters; for, in default of such discrimination, his picture would convey no more than a series of confused impressions. And in this book it has been the design of the chronicler to present the character and the virtues of the British seaman, rather than the wickedness of his enemies or the horror of his sufferings.

For a tale of wrong is of no worth in itself. If in adversity men and women fail of courage and constancy and cheer, then we should lay our hands upon our mouths and keep silence, for there is no more profit in speech.

To tell, with every device of art, of a state of hopeless resignation or of a hopeless discontent, like the Russian

novelists, is merely to accuse the Creator; and (as we in England hold) falsely.

There must be an inestimable, essential value in courage and constancy and cheer, for as matters are arranged in this world, no pain nor atrocity is regarded as excessive, so it educes these virtues. Indeed we know their worth by that faculty of inward recognition by means of which alone we may properly be said to know anything.

It is for this reason that we honour the officers and men of the Mercantile Marine, with a sentiment slightly differing in kind, though not in degree, from the sentiment which we feel for the naval seaman and the professional soldier. For the business of these men is war; and it is to be supposed they made their account with contingencies when they entered the King's service. And although it is not true, what they tell you, that they are paid to face mutilation and death, inasmuch as you can no more pay a man for these things than you can buy a ticket for Heaven, not to mention that the actual sum of money in question is, broadly speaking, a standing disgrace to the nation, it is still the fact that the naval seaman and the soldier fall into another category from the civilian who confronts the enemy.

The merchant seaman is a peaceful trader. During many generations before the war, the whole duty of defending the Mercantile Marine fell upon the Royal Navy. It was not always so. In the old wars, the merchant seaman and the Navy man were very often the same, serving indiscriminately in either Service. Merchant ships mounted guns, and fought them hardily. It was a part of the instructions given to a master of the Mercantile Marine that he must defend his ship against the King's enemies. Probably the last merchant masters who engaged the enemy were the masters of the ships of the Honourable East India Company.

The Navy was evolved from the Mercantile Marine. In the beginning, the seamen of the merchant service worked a ship of war, which carried soldiers to do the fighting, and the fighting was an affair of bows and

arrows, close quarters and sharp steel, differing only from land warfare in that the men-at-arms were afloat. But in the meantime, the seamen themselves, perpetually engaged in cross-Channel raids and always in distant voyages warring against pirates, learned to fight their ships as well as to sail them, and so acquired the art of tactical manœuvring under sail, in which the ship herself becomes one with the weapons of war, like a hand wielding a sword.

Thus by degrees the soldier became eliminated from shipboard, and (to abridge the generations) the seaman became the fighting man. Traces of the old system survived to within living memory in the Royal Navy, in whose ships a master, who was not a fighting man, was responsible for the sailing of the ship. His descendant is the navigating officer, but the navigating officer of to-day is a fighting man who specialises in navigation. And the Royal Marines, who are both seamen and soldiers, and who represent military, as distinguished from naval, discipline on board, combine the two systems.

And while the evolution of the fighting seaman was proceeding in the King's ships, the merchant seaman in the trading ships was losing his military attainments and becoming the civilian proper, as we knew him before the war.

During the nineteenth century, when England became the first industrial nation, and acquired half the carrying trade of the world, the merchant seaman, in common with his kinsfolk ashore, fell into that commercial slavery which was (and is) the capital sin of England.

The men who sailed into every quarter of the globe, part-adventurers in ship and cargo, now declined into a state of hopeless dependence, ill-paid, ill-fed, ill-equipped, sent to sea in ill-found ships, sweated by the shipowners when trade was brisk, and left to rot on the beach when the insane commercial competition brought the inevitable penalty of depression.

Save when the indignant Plimsoll cursed the opulent gentlemen of a lethargic House of Commons into a spasmodic effort, the country did nothing for the men

who brought its daily food and its monstrous riches. The country knew nothing of the merchant seaman. People owned a vague idea that the sailor (as they called him) was a jovial, reckless dog, fond of his lass and his glass, usually drunk when on shore, and in that glorious condition wasting his money in riotous living, and generally getting knocked on the head and robbed in the process. But it was nobody's business but his own. Like some millions of his fellow-creatures on shore, he was the chattel of limited liability companies, whose shareholders took no sort of interest in anything whatsoever except dividends.

Consider now this silent and strange figure of the merchant seaman, pervading the centuries unnoticed. Shrewd of eye, hard-featured, tough as oak, rough-tongued, humorous, kindly, rising up and going to rest with danger as his constant copesmate, as careless of life as indifferent to death, he holds his existence solely by virtue of his precarious mastery of the implacable sea. That perpetual conflict sets him in a class apart from landward folk, of whom he conceives a certain contempt. They dwell at home at ease; they have every night in; and they ask him if he has ever beheld that glorious work of God, a sunrise at sea. They will also cheat him of his wages, sell him drugged liquor, steal the very clothes from off his body, and scorn him at the end of it.

The seaman knows he is never safe except at sea, where the rules of the brotherhood of the sea encompass him. Of that simple and generous code the people on shore are wholly ignorant. That all seamen are bound to help one another in distress is the first and greatest rule, and its other name is charity. With hazard of life and gear, with money or with goods, with food and drink, it is all one. When a man dies on shore, his neighbours gather together to relish the pageant of the funeral. When a man is killed at sea, his mates remark that poor old Bill is gone, and they hold an auction of his possessions at the foot of the foremast, and each man bids as high as he can, and then they send all the money to the widow.

If you met an officer of the Mercantile Marine in the street clad in his shore-going clothes, you would hardly guess that this grave gentleman with the quiet voice and the look, at once brooding and vigilant, as of one beset with multitudinous cares, and meeting them carefully, is a seaman—so widely does popular conception differ from reality. But in truth, from the master of a tug to the master of a liner, from the officer of an ocean-going steamship to the mate of a collier, runs a scale of infinite gradations. What is common to all is the indefinable spirit of their calling, the spirit which you shall see in action in the pages of this book.

One of its manifestations is the economy of the ship. A ship may be a noble piece of design, or it may be as destitute of imagination as a warehouse. In other words, the ship may be built by men, or it may be constructed by the semblances of men who have sold their immortal part for money. But, beautiful or ugly, the ship is nothing but a vehicle. It is a far finer vehicle than a railway locomotive, partly by reason of its immemorial and romantic history, and partly by reason of the sentience which mysteriously belongs to a ship, and which makes her, to the seaman, a person; but a vehicle she remains.

But inasmuch as she carries a community set apart and exiled from its fellows, with a common task to achieve, the community is organised into a society in which every man has his allotted business, and in which all are subject to the supreme command of the master. The reason why the society is thus organised is simple; it is because the institution of discipline is the essential condition of the accomplishment of a common enterprise. Far back along the centuries, when men believed that their chief enterprise was, not to make money but, to get to Heaven, the economy of the ship was the economy of Holy Church. The master was called the Rector; and riding high on the rail of the poop was a consecrated shrine, to which every man did obeisance when he stepped on deck. The custom survives in the Royal Navy, in which the Service man still salutes the quarterdeck when he comes on board. (The civilian,

unconscious of high matters and with no desire to offend, will drop matches on the quarterdeck and wear his hat between decks.)

The principle of the economy of a ship, whether she be a King's ship or a trader, is the principle of service, which is the principle of chivalry. It is written that a man cannot serve God and mammon. But he must serve one or the other. He was bound to service when he was born; the only liberty he owns is the liberty to choose his master; and, by a divine paradox, the one choice will give him liberty and the other slavery. And the man who serves on board ship perforce serves another than himself, and so far he has found freedom.

The discipline in a merchant ship is in part a matter of law, and in greater part an affair of tradition and of the personality of the master. The instinct of service is a part of the nature of the English. It is usually described as the love of freedom, which, in fact, it is. Thus the instinct towards servitude, or submission to tyranny, is the exact opposite to the instinct of service. Oppress the Englishman, and sooner or later he will rebel. Ask him to serve you, deal with him honestly, and he will be staunch through thick and thin.

And at this point arises the question of material recompense. During the war, the pay of the merchant seaman (not of the officers) has been doubled. That the additional wage made an inducement to encounter the hazards of war is, of course, the fact. But when the fighting begins, or the hidden blow is struck, it is not money that holds the seaman to his duty. Moreover, before the war, the seaman's pay was both inadequate and inequitable, nor was there any provision for securing him stability of employment, nor did he earn a pension.

When war was declared, it was the duty of the merchant seaman to carry supplies and munitions across the seas. Upon his faithful discharge of that duty all depended.

At first, the dangers menacing the Mercantile Marine were mines and hostile cruisers. It does not seem to have occurred to the authorities that the enemy would attack unarmed merchant vessels with submarines.

And in due time the submarine took the world by surprise. Thenceforth the merchant seaman must sail at the hazard of a deadly peril which might come unawares, and against which, in any case, he was at first utterly defenceless. He must navigate unlighted channels amid unlighted ships. He must steer new courses and learn the art of war. He never failed nor flinched. And you shall mark in these chronicles the merchant seaman, beginning unarmed and helpless, stumbling over mines, attacked by raiding cruisers, torpedoed or shot to pieces by submarines, sent adrift to go mad or drown in open boats, still sturdily going undaunted about his business, and gradually becoming a wary and valorous fighting man. He is the same merchant seaman who, but three years since, was the drudge of commerce, and who now in his own right is entered on the chivalry of the sea.

I

The Mine

The episode to be related occurred during the first weeks of the war, ere the mercantile marine understood what was happening, or perceived what might happen. To-day a mercantile marine master, attired in the uniform of his Majesty's Service, fetching up in port, will casually remark to a brother mariner, also disguised in uniform, that a day or two since he saw a vessel torpedoed a couple of cables' length ahead of him. "Shut up like a box, she did, and sank at once. And if the submarine hadn't been so greedy she could have had me instead." Which brief tale of the sea his friend receives in a genial silence, presently broken by a request not to forget to let him have that six fathoms of eight-inch hawser, whatever he does. To-day the merchant skipper, navigating at night in home waters, finds his way, as he says, by "putting his hand out to feel." But what the seaman calls the Religion of the Sea stands now as before the war. It consists in the simple faith that what will be, will be; with the corollary that land and sea

are equally dangerous and equally safe. A new illustration of an old story occurred the other day when a seaman, having been torpedoed out of his ship, came to a sailors' home, went out for a stroll, was knocked down by an omnibus, and indignantly called his Maker to witness that he had always said the sea was safer than the land.

So, upon a day in the first weeks of the war, the steamship *Runo* was placidly gliding northwards upon a gently heaving sea. Early that morning the *Runo* had left port. The master was on the bridge, and there he remained, while the officers stood their watches and relieved one another according to routine. The master had been busy until late into the preceding night, embarking the passengers; and about two o'clock in the afternoon, having been on the bridge for eight or nine hours, he went to the chart-room on the bridge deck and lay down on the sofa to get a spell of sleep.

At four o'clock the officer on watch was relieved by the chief officer. As he stood on the bridge he saw away on his left hand the haze shrouding the highlands of the coast, and two or three trawlers, printed dark upon the water in the clear light of the autumn afternoon, and beyond, the gently heaving sea stretching vacant to the horizon. The passengers were huddled in silent groups along the promenade deck, on either side of the house, or lay sick and silent below. It occurred to the second officer, who had finished his watch, to go down to the forehold to look at his bicycle. Two able seamen, seated on a skylight, were working the

pump fixed on the after end of the engine-room casing, pumping water into the galley. In the chart-room, within call of the bridge, and so instantly available, the captain lay asleep. There was no sound save the steady beat of the engines.

As a measure of precaution, additional boats had been provided, and there was enough boat accommodation for all on board. Four boats, two on either side, were swung outboard from the davits, and the rest of the boats were on chocks on deck. The value of boats in saving life depends first of all upon the ability of their crews in getting them away from the ship. If the crews are practised, and the passengers are under control, in smooth weather the operation should be successfully accomplished.

The chief officer on watch on the bridge had noted that the clock told half-past four, when he was shot into the air, fell heavily to the deck, where he lay unconscious, a grating on the top of him. The man at the wheel saw a huge column of water rise alongside, as he was flung down and sandwiched between two gratings. At the same moment the two compasses and every other fitting on the bridge were broken to pieces. The second officer, down in the forehold attending to his bicycle, was conscious of a tremendous explosion, which dashed him upwards against the ceiling, whence he dropped stunned. The able seamen sitting on the skylight, who were working the pump, were flung upon the deck. Picking themselves up, they climbed instantly upon the top of the engine-room casing, port

side, where was the boat to which they were allotted. It was already filled with frightened passengers. The seamen helped to launch the boat, then went to help the passengers embark in the boat on the starboard side. The third engineer, who had come on deck, was pitched into the water, where he remained until he was rescued by one of the boats.

In the meantime the captain in the chart-house was hurled up from the sofa, struck the ceiling, and rebounded down upon the table amid a cascade of splintered glass, and lay there bleeding and unconscious. But in three or four minutes he came to himself, and, battered as he was, with the seaman's unfailing instinct to get on deck in a crisis, he staggered to the bridge. Blood was running down his face and dripped from a gash in his arm. By this time the chief officer and the steersman were on their feet again; the ship was still forging on, but at the same time settling ominously down by the head; and in the water were boats and swimmers, from whom the ship was receding. The master, seeing the people in the water, put the helm over hard a-starboard to turn the ship in their direction. He issued orders to stop the engines, to hoist the distress signal, and blew the siren to call the trawlers near by. He sent the chief officer to muster the passengers and to launch the remaining boats.

About ten minutes had elapsed since the explosion, and in those minutes a great deal had happened. Below in the engine-room the engine-room staff, at the impact of the explosion,

felt a sudden heel to port, and a sensation as if the ship had run against a stone wall. The second engineer said that "it was just like going into a stone wall. It was a sudden thud and a stop." For a few minutes no order came from the bridge, so that the chief engineer did not touch the engines, which continued working at full speed. Thus, while the captain, the chief officer and the man at the wheel, and the second officer in the forehold were all lying prostrate, the engine-room staff remained below, in suspense, awaiting orders. The brief disability of the ship's officers had no other effect upon the engine-room; but it disastrously affected the passengers. The whole mass of them, filled with panic terror, scrambled for the boats. By the time the master and the chief officer had regained their senses it was too late.

The boat resting on chocks on the engine-room casing, port side, to which the two seamen had sprung instantly after the explosion, was indeed orderly filled with the stewardess and women passengers, twenty-six in all, and the chief officer having by that time come to her, she was swung out, lowered and cast off in a seamanlike manner. But in the meantime the alleyways were choked with struggling passengers, through whom the seamen could not force their way to the boats. Such was the general position. The details are obscure, but it seems evident that the foremost boat on the starboard side, which had been filled with water by the explosion, was somehow emptied, hoisted from its chocks and lowered into the water by the

stewards and the passengers. Why she went away with no more than two passengers in her, and why neither passengers nor boat were ever seen again, are not known.

The stewards and passengers between them lowered four more boats. Of one they cut the falls, so that the boat dropped, hanging alongside by the painter, and filled with water. The people were somehow hauled on board again. Of another they cut the foremost falls, but nevertheless the boat was safely got away, with one able seaman and thirty to thirty-five passengers on board, none of whom was ever seen again. Another boat, carrying twenty or thirty people, capsized. Some of these passengers kept themselves afloat, and these were the people whom the master saw when he came on the bridge and put the helm over in order to save them. Some were picked up. The last of the four boats to be lowered by the confused mob of stewards and passengers went away full of people, who were never seen again.

By this time the engines had been stopped, and the ship was gradually settling down, the main hold being half full of water. The master perceiving that, in answer to his signal, two steam trawlers were coming up, ordered that no more boats were to be lowered, and shouted through a megaphone to the trawlers to pick up the people in the water. The trawlers, having saved a number of the swimmers, drew alongside, one on either side the quarter. It was then about twenty-five minutes from the time of the explosion. The whole of the rest of the people

on board the *Runo* were then transhipped to the trawlers.

The master was the last to leave his ship. She was obviously sinking, but the master determined to beach her if possible, and requested the skipper of the trawler to take her in tow. Two men of the *Runo* and two of the trawler's crew went in the trawler's boat to the *Runo* with a hawser, made it fast, and remained on board the *Runo*. For all they knew she might have gone down under their feet. And as soon as the hawser tightened a noise like thunder echoed in the bowels of the *Runo*. The bulkhead of the main hold had collapsed under the weight of water, and the *Runo* began to dip her nose deeper. The master of the *Runo* instantly signalled from the trawler ordering the four men to return to her. These resolute seamen promptly cut the hawser, tumbled into their boat, cast off and pulled away. Scarce were they clear of the doomed ship when she plunged by the head, and the sea closed over her. It was about an hour and forty minutes since she had struck the mine.

The next day, Sunday, the skipper of a trawler cruising in that place perceived a wide litter of floating wreckage and boats floating bottom upwards. He counted eight boats, all of which were capsized except one, which was full of water. The skipper picked up a meat chest, a chest full of books, and a cork jacket.

What became of the passengers who went away in the boats? Those who were in the

first boat, launched under the orders of the chief officer, were picked up by a trawler. The boat which had a couple of passengers on board simply vanished. Two boats which went away full of people were afterwards recovered empty. What had become of the passengers? The sea was calm, and the boats were within a few miles of the land when they left the ship. The people in them had nothing to do but to sit still, and they would have been rescued. Yet they simply disappeared.

II

The Submarine

In the grey noon of an October day the *Glitra,* an old, small iron steamship, was approaching the harbour of a neutral country, whose tall headlands loomed ahead. So far the master, following the directions of the Admiralty, had brought his ship scathless. Within an hour or two she would be safe.

The master and the chief officer were on the bridge, and an able seaman was posted as lookout on the forecastle head. Up went the flag calling for a pilot, and presently the master descried the pilot's motor-boat swiftly approaching from the shore. At the same moment he perceived a long and low object moving towards him on the water some three miles to seaward. The apparition was like a blow over the heart to the men of the *Glitra.* But it might be a British submarine. The master, staring through his glass at the flag flying from the short mast of the nearing vessel, made out the black German eagles. The pilot saw them too, for he went about, heading back to harbour; and with

him the men of the *Glitra* beheld their last hope for the ship implacably receding, and confronted the inevitable with the dogged composure of the British seaman.

The master altered course, steering away from the submarine, which, fetching a wide circle, drew towards the *Glitra*. The submarine had the speed of the old cargo-boat, and as she came closer the master heard the metallic ring of tube-firing, and a flight of small shot sang about his ears. Thereupon he stopped his engines, and the *Glitra* lay still, while the submarine drew nearer and stopped within a ship's length of the steamer. There she lay, the water lipping on the rounded hull, from which the conning-tower rose amidships. The commanding officer stood by the rail of the conning-tower, and men were descending thence to the narrow platforms fore and aft, and busying themselves on the deck. Then the submarine hoisted the code signal, meaning "drag-rope"; and the men on board the *Glitra* saw the Germans get a collapsible boat into the water. Two men pulled, and a third sat in the stern-sheets.

The men of the *Glitra* awaited events in silence; and the next thing of which the master was acutely conscious was the cold muzzle of a revolver pressing into the flesh of his neck, while the excited German officer wielding that weapon ordered him in throaty but intelligible English to leave his bridge and to get his boats away in ten minutes, as his ship was to be torpedoed.

The master, going down on deck with a

disagreeable sensation as of a pistol aimed at his back, mustered the silent crew, who assembled under the hard eyes of three Germans covering them with revolvers, and who at the same time beheld two guns on the submarine, one forward and the other aft of the conning-tower, trained expectantly upon the ship. Then the master, looking directly at the small black circle of the revolver's muzzle, was ordered to haul down his flag. Still followed by the revolver, he went to the halliards and dropped the flag to the rail, over which it hung drooping and disconsolate. And then he was ordered to fetch the ship's papers, which are the most sacred trust of the master of a vessel. Down below he went, with the pistol at his back; and no sooner had he vanished down the companion-way than the German officer seized the flag, tore it across and across, flung the pieces on the deck, and stamped upon them like a maniac. The master came on deck to witness the remarkable spectacle of an officer of H.I.M. Imperial Navy wiping his sea-boots on the Red Ensign.

The German, having thus gratified his emotions, again turned his revolver on the master, ordered him to hand over the ship's papers, forbade him to fetch his coat, and refused to allow the crew, who were sullenly launching the three boats, to get any additional clothing. Then the German officer ordered the three boats to pull to the submarine and to make fast to her.

The men of the *Glitra,* fetching up alongside the submarine, gazed curiously upon the dull, rigid faces of the German bluejackets, and

marked the strange and ugly forms of the Tinfish, as the merchant service calls it. So soon as the boats were made fast, the submarine, with a grinding noise like the working of millstones, drew off about a ship's length, towing the boats, and stopped again. During this time the master, scanning his lost ship intently, saw the three Germans left on board her hurrying to and fro, taking his charts and compasses and lowering them into their own boat. Then one of them, supposed by the master to be an engineer, went below. Presumably the German turned on the sea-cocks, for the master presently observed the *Glitra* to be settling down by the stern.

It was then about a quarter of an hour since the crew had quitted the *Glitra;* and the commanding officer of the submarine ordered the master to cast off and to proceed towards the land.

As the boats drew away from his ship, lying deserted and sinking lower into the water, the master, watching, perceived the dim shape of the submarine still circling about her, like a sea-beast of prey. Gradually the boats drew out of sight of the last scene.

The men had been rowing for about an hour when the pilot-boat came up and took them in tow. Then the men of the *Glitra* were taken on board a neutral ship of war. The master of the *Glitra* and the crew, thus stranded in a foreign man-of-war with nothing in the world except what they had on, heard the growl of guns rolling from seaward, where the submarine was working her will on the desolate ship.

The capture and destruction of the *Glitra* marks an early stage in the evolution of the German pirate. The destruction of the ship in default of having brought her before the Prize Court of the enemy, was a violation of international law, which might, however, be defended on the plea of necessity. The refusal to permit officers and men to take with them their effects was an infraction both of universal rule and of the German Naval Prize Regulations of 1914. On the other hand, it may be contended that the enemy did in fact place the crew of the captured ship in safety.

The British were threatened with revolvers, and guns were trained upon them, but these weapons were not fired, and no one was injured. In his later stages the German pirate observed no such restraint. As for the insult to the British flag, while it may have been the result of an unpleasant personal idiosyncrasy, it is also significant of a mental condition prevailing among German officers, of which examples subsequently multiplied.

III

"War is War"

On November 23rd, 1914, the little cargo-boat *Malachite,* four days out from Liverpool, was drawing near to the French coast. It was a quarter to four in the afternoon; the ship, rolling gently to the easterly swell, was within an hour or so of Havre, which lay out of sight beyond Cape La Hève, darkening in the haze some four miles distant on the port bow. The master and the mate, who were on the bridge, descried the indistinct form of a long and low vessel lying about two miles away on the starboard beam. As they looked, the mist clinging about the unknown craft lit with a flash, followed by the report of a gun, and a shot sang across the bows of the *Malachite.* Then the two officers on the bridge recognised the vessel to be a German submarine. The first that the men below in the engine-room knew was the clang of the bridge-telegraph and the swinging over of the needle on the dial to "stop." They eased down the engines, and as the ship lost way, they heard two long blasts of the steam whistle

sounded on the bridge. Then silence, the ship rolling where she lay.

The master and the mate, standing against the bridge-rail, contemplated the approach of the submarine. The German officer and the quartermaster were on the conning-tower. Abaft of the conning-tower, on deck, a seaman stood beside a small gun, which was fitted with a shoulder-piece. The submarine drew close alongside the *Malachite,* and her officers looked down into the eyes of the German naval officer, and the German naval officer looked up at the two British seamen. These knew well enough what to expect, and merely wondered in what manner it would arrive.

The German officer was polite but business-like. Where have you come from? Where are you going? What is your cargo? These were his questions, framed in that school English which for many years every German midshipman has learned as part of his pass examination, in order that he may communicate with the conquered race of Britain.

The master gave the required information. He could do nothing else. Then the submarine officer gave an order, and a sailor ran along the deck of the submarine and hoisted the German ensign on the short mast mounted aft. All being now in order, the submarine officer requested the master of the *Malachite* to prepare to leave his ship at the expiration of ten minutes, and to bring with him the ship's papers.

The master, mustering the crew, got away the two lifeboats, and fetched his papers. The

two boats came alongside the submarine; and now the submarine officer gazed down at the stolid British seamen, who were utterly in his power, and they stared curiously up at the trim and easy German.

The master, handing over his papers, since there was no help for it, asked that the ship's log and the articles might be given back to him. The submarine officer declined to grant the request. Then he added, "I am sorry I cannot accommodate you and your crew, but war is war."

Then he told the master to stand clear, and as the two boats hauled off, the submarine got under way. The men in the boats, resting on their oars, saw the submarine open fire on the *Malachite* at a range of about 200 yards, saw the shot strike the ship at the base of the funnel, and a hissing cloud of steam and smoke enshroud her, saw shot after shot pierce the hull, and the ship beginning to settle down by the head.

Darkness was gathering, and the fog was closing in, when the master ordered the men to give way, and steered towards Havre. As they pulled through the gloom, the men in the boats heard the intermittent bark of the gun sounding from seaward. After about three-quarters of an hour there was silence.

They came into Havre Harbour at half-past eight, after a pull of some three and a half hours. Subsequently they learned that the submarine, having fired the ship, left her, and that she remained afloat all that night and the next day.

The taking of the *Malachite* is typical of the

end of the first phase of submarine warfare; the phase in which the German officer, individual acts of brutality apart, at least recognised the existence of the law of nations, used a certain consideration for the crews of captured vessels, and was occasionally even courteous. On the other side, merchant ships were still totally defenceless; and sometimes, as in the case of the *Malachite,* were taken within sight of land and close to a port of arrival.

In the next phase of submarine warfare, war was still war, but it was also murder. At the beginning of February, 1915, Germany issued the following official announcement:

(1) "The waters round Great Britain and Ireland, including the English Channel, are hereby declared a military area. From February 18th every hostile merchant ship in these waters will be destroyed, even if it is not always possible to avoid thereby the dangers which threaten the crews and passengers.

(2) "Neutral ships will also incur danger in the military area, because, in view of the misuse of flags ordered by the British Government on January 31st and the accidents of naval warfare, it cannot always be avoided that attacks may involve neutral ships.

(3) "Traffic northwards around the Shetland Islands, in the east part of the North Sea, and a strip of at least thirty sea miles in breadth along the coast of Holland is not endangered.

"(Sgd.) Von Pohl,
"Chief of Admiralty Staff."

To which laborious threat the British Foreign Office, on February 7th, 1915, replied by stating that the use of a neutral flag by a belligerent, within prescribed limitations, was perfectly legitimate, adding the extremely pertinent declaration that:

"To destroy ship, non-combatant crew and cargo, as Germany has announced her intention of doing, is nothing less than an act of piracy on the high seas."

The Foreign Office does not specifically brand the Imperial German Government as a pirate; it declares that the doings of the public ships of the Imperial German Government are acts of piracy. It is hard to trace the distinction, if indeed there be a distinction. The President of the United States, in his message to Congress of April 2nd, 1917, does in effect state that the Imperial German Government is *hostis humani generis,* which is the definition of a pirate. His Majesty's Attorney-General, Sir Frederick Smith, K.C., in his book "The Destruction of Merchant Ships under International Law" (J. M. Dent & Sons, London, 1917), states his conclusion as follows: "The very use of submarines against merchantmen—even against enemy merchantmen, as has been shown above—is unlawful. All—belligerents and neutrals alike—who have suffered loss in lives or property as a result of this unlawful conduct are entitled to full reparation."

And what about the merchant seamen, shattered, mutilated and drowned in pursuance of their lawful occasions? This at least; that,

while they endured and perished, a gigantic storm of wrath was formidably gathering below their horizon, the wrath of all other sea nations, brooding upon Germany and Austria, and charged with a vengeance insatiable as the sea.

The Germans, inherently treacherous, have no notion of keeping their word, and they began, as usual, before the scheduled time. While Admiral von Pohl, majestically ensconced in the Reichsmarineamt in Berlin, was methodically inditing his lying accusation of the misuse of the neutral flag by the British, a German submarine (it was reported) was cruising about the English Channel flying the French flag. That was before January 30th, 1915; the German proclamation of "military" murder "area" was not issued until a day or two afterwards, and therein it was stated that the new arrangements were to begin on February 18th. The *Tokomaru* was sunk on January 30th.

She was a steamship of nearly 4,000 tons register, had left Wellington, New Zealand, three weeks previously, on January 22nd, and had touched at Teneriffe, which port was swarming with Germans. The *Tokomaru* lay at Teneriffe for eleven hours, during which time many shore boats came alongside. The visitors could easily have ascertained her destination. Whether or not that circumstance was related to her destruction is not known. Teneriffe belongs to Spain.

Like the *Malachite,* the *Tokomaru* was bound for Havre. Off Ushant she spoke a French man-of-war, giving her name and destination.

At about nine o'clock on the morning of Saturday, January 30th, 1915, she was within seven miles of the Havre lightship. Somewhere on the seafloor beneath the *Tokomaru's* keel lay the bones of the *Malachite*. It was a fine, clear morning, the land mistily sparkling beyond the shining levels of the sea. Some of the crew were busy about the anchors, preparing to moor. The master and the second and third officers were on the bridge. An able seaman was posted on the forecastle head, looking out. Between the ship and the shore a French trawler was steaming about her business.

Without any sign or warning a tremendous blow struck the ship on the port side with a loud explosion, and a column of water, rising to the height of the funnels, descended bodily upon the three officers on the bridge, swept along the decks, poured down the companion-ways, and filled up the stokehold. The ship leaned over to port, and officers and men felt her settling down under their feet.

Several things happened simultaneously. The master, cool and composed, looking seaward, perceived a little hooded dark object cleaving the surface about 600 yards away on the port beam, and, making a path from it to the ship, irregular, eddying patches of foam. There, then, was the submarine and there was the track of her torpedo, ending in a spreading inky patch of water about the ship, where the sea was washing the coal out of the bunkers. Even as the master ordered the boats to be manned, the periscope of the submarine disappeared. At

the same time the wireless operator, shut up in his room, was making the S.O.S. signal, and the French trawler in the distance began to steam at full speed towards the ship.

Owing to the list of the vessel the falls of the boats jammed. The crew cut the ropes, hammered away the chocks, and stood by, quietly awaiting the order to launch. They were all wet through, for those on deck had been smothered in the falling water, and those below had struggled up the ladders against descending torrents. There they stood, the deck dropping by inches beneath their feet, and tilting towards the bows, until the sea was washing over the forecastle head, when the master ordered them into the boats. The master was the last to leave the ship. His cabin being full of water, he was unable to save the ship's papers and money. Sixty-two pounds belonging to the owners, and about seventeen pounds belonging to the master himself, were lost.

By this time the French trawler had come up, and the officers and men, fifty-eight all told, were taken on board. The trawler stood by, while a flotilla of French torpedo-boats, arriving from Havre with several trawlers, steamed swiftly in circles round the sinking ship, in order to guard against a renewed attack.

At half-past ten, about an hour and a half after she was torpedoed, the *Tokomaru,* with her cargo of general goods and fruit, went down in a great swirl of water. When it had subsided, the trawler moored a buoy over the spot, and took the *Tokomaru's* people into Havre.

Then and there the master must begin his dreary task of communicating with the British Consul, and with his owners. And then messages in cypher sped over the cables to the Foreign Office, to the Admiralty, and to all concerned, altogether a surprising number of persons; while the German submarine sped on her evil way, invisible.

Eleven days afterwards a lifebuoy, painted white, and inscribed with the legend "S.S. *Tokomaru,* Southampton," was picked up off Dover.

IV

The Last Chance

Early on the morning of July 4th, 1915, a certain wireless station on shore took in and recorded a conversation which was being carried on between a vessel, the *Anglo-Californian,* in the North Atlantic, flying for her life, and three of his Majesty's ships which were rushing to her rescue. Figure to yourself the wireless operator, a staunch youth, in his narrow room abaft the bridge and exposed to fire, the earpieces hooped over his head, making and taking in messages amid the incessant detonation of guns, the crash of striking shots, cries, the pounding of feet along the decks, and the scream of wounded animals piercing from below. And picture, out of sight of the *Anglo-Californian,* three men-of-war foaming towards her, and in the wireless room of each a tiny cabin opening from the deck, a young bluejacket intensely occupied . . . And rapt in the same business, the operator in the wireless station on shore. And wherever the aerials pattern the sky, on sea or land, the same words or part of them, so far as the vibrations extend, flow into human cognisance.

The *Anglo-Californian,* at 8.43 a.m. to Anyone: "S.O.S., S.O.S. Being chased by submarine, S.O.S." Then he gave the position of the ship. No answer recorded. Twenty minutes later *A.-C.* again gave position, adding, "Go ahead. He is being led a dance and it is O.K. to work for a few minutes. Now altering course to south." Then "Are you——? He is rapidly overtaking us."

Answer from the void: "Steer" (so-and-so) "and keep me informed."

A.-C.: "That is impossible. *We are being fired on.*"

Answer: "Where is submarine?"

A.-C.: "Now astern."

Answer: "Endeavour carry out instructions —important."

A.-C.: "Can't—he is now on top of us and I can hear his shots hitting us."

Answer: "On your port?"

A.-C.: "Submarine on top of us and hitting us." Then, "Captain says steering" (so-and-so) "if he alters course will endanger ship."

Answer: A code message, followed first by a conversation which told that more than one man-of-war was answering the *A.-C.,* and secondly by an order.

A.-C.: "If we steer east we shall have submarine a-beam. We can't do it."

Answer: "Please give —— your speed," which was given, with *A.-C.*'s position, and colour of her funnels. *A.-C.* added, "Can see your smoke, hold on."

Answer: "According to your position I am nine miles off you."

A.-C.: "We are the transport *Anglo-Californian.*"

Answer: "Have you many passengers?"

A.-C.: "No, but we are 150 men on board as crew."

Answer: "Please fire rocket to verify position." Followed by a conversation on the subject.

Answer: "What is position of submarine?"

A.-C.: "Right astern firing at wireless."

Answer: "Let me have your position frequently."

A.-C.: "Now firing our rockets," followed by information as to position.

This was at 10.9, and at 10.12, that is, when the chase and attack had lasted for an hour and a half, the *Anglo-Californian* made,

"Submarine signals *abandon vessel as soon as possible.*"

The answer was an order, to be carried out as "a last resource."

A.-C.: "No, no, she is too close."

Then the conversation became in the stress of the moment even more like mediumistic communications. The record runs:

A.-C.: "We are stopped. Can see you." (Or, "Can you see?")

Answer: "Stopped and blowing off. Can see you distinctly. Am about S.W. from you, *hold on.*"

A.-C.: "In what direction? He is on the port side. We are between you and him.

Hurry, hurry, hurry. He is getting abeam to torpedo us."

Answer: "I am coming."

A.-C.: "We are keeping him astern now."

(?) *Answer:* "O.K. Endeavour to keep his attention."

Answer: "You will be quite safe when (illegible)."

A.-C.: "Steering zig-zag." Followed by questions and answers as to course and number of masts of the *Anglo-Californian,* in the midst of which *A.-C.* interjected, "For God's sake hurry up. What gone? Firing like blazes," and "Keeping him astern. Hurry up."

Answer: "*We are firing,* can you inform result?"

A.-C.: "Can hear you . . . have stopped . . . no, no. . . . *Several being wounded* . . . shrapnel, I believe."

Answer: "Keep men below or those on deck to lay face down."

A.-C.: "All taking shelter in front of bridge-houses. He is firing shell." Followed by more questions and answers as to masts and speed, then "Sub. keeping pace; he is still very close, within a couple of hundred yards. Captain wants to know if you will fire to scare him."

Answer: "Firing to scare him; please head towards me."

A.-C.: "We can't; you are astern and so is sub. Head for us in roundabout route."

Answer: A tactical order, and an inquiry if smoke can be seen.

A.-C.: "Yes, yes, a long way off. Can see your smoke astern."

Answer: "What bearing?"

Two minutes later, after a confused interchange of messages, *Anglo-Californian* said: "They can't tell what bearing, now sinking."

Answer: "Are you torpedoed?"

A.-C.: "Not yet, but shots in plenty hitting. Broken glass all around me. Stick it, old man."

(?) *Answer:* "Yes—you bet."

A.-C. (suddenly becoming American in language): "Say, the place stinks of gunpowder, am lying on the floor."

(?) *Answer:* "Nothing better, old man."

(?) "Keep your pecker up, old man."

A.-C.: "Sure thing." And "Is there anything else coming to us, please?"

Answer: "Yes, I am—coming full speed ——knots."

A.-C.: "I have had to leave 'phones. Yes, I say I smell gunpowder here strong and am lying on the floor, my gear beginning to fly around with concussion."

Answer: ". . . smoke W.N.W. of me. There is a mass (?) of fight on our starboard side and the sub. is on our port side."

Three minutes later, at 11.23 (two hours and three-quarters after the attack began), the *Anglo-Californian* makes:

"Submarine has dived. Submarine has dived."

Answer: "Report her trail at intervals."

A.-C.: "I hope she stops down there, it is

getting hot here," and after some remarks as to position,

Answer: "Have you launched all boats?"

A.-C.: "Yes. Two ships coming, one abeam and one at the port quarter. Don't worry, he has gone dipped."

Answer: "Has submarine gone?"

A.-C.: "Yes."

It was now 11.42 in the forenoon, or four hours since the attack had opened. What had been happening during that time outside the wireless room?

At eight o'clock in the morning the master, an experienced seaman of fifty-seven, was on the bridge, whence he sighted a submarine on the port beam. She flew no colours and was proceeding on the surface. The master instantly altered course in order to place the submarine astern of the *Anglo-Californian,* telegraphed an order to the engine-room to increase speed, and told our friend the wireless operator to send out the S.O.S. signal. As it was answered by a man-of-war, the master knew thenceforth that if he could hold on long enough he could save his ship and his very valuable Government cargo. Altering course continually, he kept the submarine manœuvring for an hour; but the enemy was gaining on the ship, and at nine o'clock the submarine opened fire. She mounted a gun forward of her conning-tower and a second gun of another calibre aft of the conning-tower.

During the next half-hour men were being hit, there was blood on the decks, the ship was

frequently struck, and splinters were flying. As the submarine manœuvred to get into position to fire a torpedo the master of the *Anglo-Californian* twisted his ship away. As a fencer watches the blade of his antagonist, so the master fixed his gaze on the low hull, the figures of the officer and helmsman on the railed conning-tower, the gunners and the men firing rifles from the deck, all wreathed with smoke, implacably determined to take his ship.

Then the submarine hoisted the signal A.B., "Abandon ship." It was at this moment that the wireless operator signalled "Hurry, hurry, hurry. He is getting abeam to torpedo us." It appears that the submarine continued to fire without cessation, while the master ordered the engines to be stopped and the boats to be got away. It is certain that the crew, getting into the boats and hauling upon the falls, were fired on; that when the boats were in the water one was fired on; and that, in the stress and confusion, both boats were capsized. Then the submarine stopped firing.

At the same moment the smoke of one of the pursuing men-of-war darkened on the horizon, and projectiles fired at extreme range made fountains about the submarine, and then it was that the wireless operator received a message from another man-of-war telling the *Anglo-Californian* to hold on.

At this the master resolved to make a last effort to save his ship. In the water alongside the men had righted the boats, and were ready to shove off, when the master ordered them to

return to the ship. At first the firemen, who had been desperately heaving coal below, living from minute to minute, for more than two hours, hung in the wind, but they came on board and went below again, and once more hove coal into the furnaces. The engines were started, and as the ship gathered way the submarine opened fire, aiming at the bridge and the boats.

The master's son, who was second officer, was standing beside his father on the bridge when a stunning shock flung him upon the deck, and when he staggered to his feet, the master was not there. He had been blown to pieces. The young man seized the wheel; the next moment a shot smashed a spoke; but he hung on, and never stirred from his post until the rescue. The first officer took command, and presently two men-of-war hove in sight and the submarine dived. It was then about half an hour since the submarine had signalled "Abandon ship."

The master and eight men had been killed, and seven men had been wounded. But they had saved the ship. The master saved her by taking the last desperate chance, but himself he did not save.

The *Anglo-Californian* was escorted into the nearest port by the men-of-war, and after temporary repairs had been executed, she proceeded upon her voyage.

V

Small Game

The little steamship Downshire was small game, but the Germans are nothing if not thorough. The case illustrates to what extent, in these early stages of the war, the master felt he could act on his own responsibility. He went as far as he could. The German officer, although, in sinking the *Downshire,* he was committing an act of piracy, behaved with courtesy and consideration, and spoke "in perfect English."

The *Downshire* left an Irish port early in the afternoon of February 20th, 1915, and by half-past five, in a clear and calm twilight, she was eight or ten miles from the English coast, steaming at about nine knots, when the master perceived a submarine. The enemy vessel was running on the surface, nearly two miles away on the starboard bow, and heading for the *Downshire.*

The master instantly altered course to bring the submarine astern of the *Downshire,* ordered full speed, and roused out all the men, ten in number. The submarine also altered course and began to chase, rapidly overhauling the

Downshire. At a range of about 400 yards the submarine opened fire from the machine-gun mounted on her deck.

Here was a pretty situation for the peaceful master of a little coasting trader. He kept his wits about him and his eyes on the enemy; and, continuing to manœuvre his ship to put the submarine astern, swiftly reckoned his chances. People think, not in words, but in pictures, dim or clear. The sharper the emergency, the more vivid the picture. The master, never shifting his steady seaman's gaze from the submarine gaining hand over hand astern, beheld with his inward eye the pieces of his problem sliding together and slipping apart again as he bent his mind to fit them to a pattern.

He foresaw the submarine, with her turn of speed, drawing so close alongside that, as the machine-gun crackled and spat, his men would be struck down; he foresaw the long fifteen miles to the nearest port, partly as measured on the thumb-stained chart, partly as a seascape of deep water, in which the submarine could venture all the way, knowing that she could safely submerge at any moment; he foresaw his ship, shoving for safety under continued fire for an hour and a half, splinters flying, men rolled on the deck; he may even have seen himself, crumpled up beside the wheel, and a darting vision of the ship being taken after all; he imagined the coiling track of a torpedo whitening towards him, and foretasted the ultimate explosion; and at the same moment he reckoned the chance of the torpedo striking a hull draw-

ing four feet six inches forward and ten feet six inches aft, and perceived that the torpedo might pass under the keel, and also that it might not. . . .

In the meantime the submarine was still gaining on the *Downshire*. She fired a second shot. The master, with his problem now resolved into a grim pattern whose significance was imperative and inexorable, may or may not have considered the possibility of ramming the submarine. He had no instructions on the subject. But if he did consider that possibility, he must also have foreseen that if he failed in the attempt, the submarine would certainly try to torpedo him. If the torpedo hit, all was over. If it missed, the enemy would give no quarter.

The submarine fired a third shot at close range. That settled it. The master had held on as long as he could. Utterly defenceless as he was, he had not yielded at the first shot, nor the second, nor until he saw that the submarine had the speed of him. He stopped the engines. The *Downshire* drifted on, losing speed, and lay rolling slightly, while the submarine, drawing up to within fifty yards of the port quarter, stopped also.

The *Downshire's* firemen, who had been furiously heaving coal, momently expecting the next shot to crash into the engine-room and very likely cut the main steampipe, came on deck, black, sweating and sullen.

The German submarine officer, addressing the *Downshire* "in perfect English" from his conning-tower, courteously issued his orders. The

crew of the *Downshire* were to take to their boats, and the master was to bring the ship's papers to the submarine. (They could have given small satisfaction to the German, for the *Downshire's* sole cargo was five tons of empty cement bags.)

Even at this period of the war British seamen knew enough of the German officer to know that his temper was about as calculable as the temper of a tiger. The crew of the *Downshire* launched their two lifeboats, pulled towards the submarine, and stared, composed and curious, at the strange vessel and the foreign officer. That personage was decisive but urbane. He regretted the necessity of his action, which, he said, was due to the exigencies of war. One boat he ordered to pull to windward. The other boat, in which was the master, was ordered alongside the submarine. The master and the boat's crew were taken on board, where they scrutinised the white faces and the stiff overtrained figures of the German bluejackets. Then the submarine officer ordered the second officer and the steward of the *Downshire* back into their boat, telling them to get provisions for the *Downshire's* men. Five men of the submarine's crew pulled the boat to the *Downshire,* and while the second officer and the steward were fetching provisions from below and placing them in the boat, the Germans were occupied in fixing a bomb under the *Downshire.*

These proceedings were watched in an absorbed silence by the master and the *Downshire's* men in the submarine, and by the men in

the second lifeboat, standing off at a little distance. It was the execution of their ship they were contemplating. By this time it was evident that no harm to themselves was intended.

The first lifeboat, stocked with gear and provisions, returned to the submarine. The Germans went on board, the master and the rest of his men embarked again, shoved off, and pulled away to join the second lifeboat, while the submarine got under way, drew further from the ship, stopped again, and waited.

The men of the *Downshire* rowed away into the gathering darkness, and the submarine faded out of sight, and the form of the lonely ship grew blurred and dim. There was a flash of fire, the sound of a dull explosion rolled across the water, the distant ship plunged bows under and vanished.

It was then six o'clock. The whole episode had lasted half an hour. Within the next half-hour the *Downshires* were picked up by two steam drifters.

The treatment by the German officer of the officers and men of the *Downshire* shines by contrast with the conduct of some of his colleagues. That circumstance does not alter the fact that, in destroying the ship and in setting her people adrift, he violated the law of the sea.

VI

"Where is 'Harpalion'?"

It was tea-time on board the steamship *Harpalion* proceeding up the Channel, bound for the United States. The third officer went to the bridge, the master and the Trinity House pilot went down to the master's cabin to tea. The second officer sat at tea with the engineers, and here follows his account of what happened.

"We had just sat down to tea at the engineers' table, and the chief engineer was saying 'Grace.' He had just uttered the words 'For what we are about to receive may the Lord make us truly thankful,' when there came an awful crash. I never saw such a smash as it caused. Cups and dishes were shattered to pieces, everything in the pantry was broken, and photographs screwed into the walls fell off."

So the second officer told *The Times,* from whose issue of February 25th, 1915, the passage is quoted. Such was the event inside the ship. Now let us look at it from outside, from the bridge of a distant man-of-war. Her commanding officer, watching the *Harpalion* afar off, saw a column of water leap alongside her, then an-

other, and heard the dull boom of an explosion, like the slamming of a heavy door in a vault, instantly followed by a second boom. He ordered full speed and steamed towards the *Harpalion.*

On board her, master, pilot, officers and crew had all tumbled up on deck, where, in a fog of steam and smoke, they were just in time to receive the descending fountain of the second explosion. The ship listed to port and began to settle by the head; it was reported to the master that three firemen had been killed below; and he saw to seaward the periscope of a submarine. He also beheld the comfortable spectacle of a King's ship tearing towards him with a bone in her mouth.

The master ordered the boats to be got away. One was already in the water, filled with men, by the time the man-of-war drew close alongside. Her commanding officer hailed the master, who instantly informed the naval officer of the presence of an enemy submarine. The naval officer assumed the conduct of affairs. He ordered the boat's crew then afloat to stand by to help save the rest of the crew; and immediately started in pursuit of the submarine, cruising at high speed about the *Harpalion* while her people were getting into the boats. Failing to find the submarine, the man-of-war returned, embarked the master, the pilot, the rest of the officers and the crew, thirty-nine all told, and three dead men, and let the boats drift.

The naval officer and the master then took counsel together. The master thought the ship

was sinking. The naval officer thought she was likely to keep afloat, but that, as the enemy submarine was probably hanging about, it would be unsafe to leave the crew in the *Harpalion.* It was therefore decided to land the crew. The naval officer signalled to the nearest naval station asking that a tug should be sent, and proposed that the *Harpalion* should be left anchored with lights burning, an arrangement which was not, in fact, carried into execution.

The man-of-war went on to the nearest naval station and landed the living and the dead. She then reported events to her own naval station. The ship was torpedoed at a little after five o'clock in the afternoon of Wednesday, February 24th, 1915. By a quarter to six she was abandoned. For nearly twelve hours afterwards the *Harpalion* was lost. The naval officer was right; she was not sinking. If a tug was sent out that evening in response to the signal, she failed to find the *Harpalion.*

But let it not be supposed that the Admiralty allows a ship to disappear without explanation. That evening and the next day, Thursday, the Admiralty was asking every naval station in the vicinity of the loss, "Where is *Harpalion?*" Station A reported trying to find *Harpalion,* incidentally reporting at the same time that three other vessels had been put down. Station B reported *Harpalion* derelict, anchored, lights burning, and later, "Cannot find, but searching." Station C replied, "Not in my district."

Where was *Harpalion?* She was simply drifting about, masterless and miserable. She

drifted from 5.45 p.m. on Wednesday to 4 p.m. on Thursday. Then she was sighted by the steamship *Ariel,* whose master promptly sent four men on board to investigate matters. It was clearly a salvage case; but in their deposition the four gallant seamen say simply, "We four men got on board as prize crew."

To be precise, a prize crew is a crew placed by the captor on board a vessel captured by an act of war. Salvage is another affair. Any ship succouring another vessel, derelict or wrecked, is entitled to claim reward from the owners. In the case of the *Ariel* and *Harpalion,* it would seem that the men of the *Ariel,* considering their help to be in the nature of war service rather than a commercial transaction, preferred to call themselves a prize crew. But this is conjecture, for the four deponents, appearing for a moment in the light of history, have gone again. There were the first officer of the *Ariel,* two able seamen and one apprentice.

They boarded the deserted *Harpalion* on Thursday afternoon, and their own ship, the *Ariel,* went on her way short-handed. What they did next is not revealed, except that they tried to take her to Cardiff. Their situation was dangerous enough. The ship was full of water forward, and listing to port. At any moment a questing submarine might have sent her to the bottom without warning. Presumably the Prize Crew tried to get steam on her, but there is nothing to show that they were successful. If they failed, the ship was not under control. If they succeeded, their progress must

have been very slow. In any case, there were only four men, instead of forty-one, to work a ship of 3,669 tons register. The chief officer would be on the bridge, steering and conning the ship, one able seaman in the stokehold, one in the engine-room, leaving the apprentice for services as requisite, such as getting meals, carrying messages, and doing odd jobs.

The full story of that night on board the *Harpalion* spent by the prize crew adrift in a ship which they believed to be sinking, remains to be told. Perhaps it will never be told, like many another deed of the sea.

Early on the Friday morning wind and sea began to rise. The *Harpalion* was then within about twenty miles of the spot upon which she had been torpedoed. The ship was heavily water-logged; the water was washing in and out of her, and the chief officer was unable to keep her head to the sea. They drifted helplessly before the gale in that dark and bitter February morning, until eight o'clock, the hour at which all over the world the white ensign is hoisted in the quarter-deck of his Majesty's ships. And at that hour the men of the *Harpalion* descried three men-of-war surging toward them through the smothering sea. Two flew the tricolour and one the white ensign.

The British torpedo-boat drew near and hove a line on board the *Harpalion*. The prize crew hauled it in, hauled in a grass rope, hauled in a hawser and made it fast, and the little torpedo-boat began to tow the dead weight of the big cargo-boat. The weather grew worse, and the

torpedo-boat, unable to make any way, was obliged to cast off. "We still stuck to the *Harpalion,*" the prize crew deposed. They stuck to her all that day, in wind and sea. A tug came, but so heavy was the weather she could not get the *Harpalion* in tow, and so stood by her. Night came, and still the prize crew stuck to their prize. Towards midnight the ship was settling dangerously, and the prize crew were forced to conclude that they could do no more. At half-past eleven on that Friday night they went over the side into their boat, left the *Harpalion* and went on board the tug. They were not much too soon. Thirty-five minutes afterwards the *Harpalion* went down.

The tug landed the prize crew at Havre, where, before the vice-consul, they made a deposition of the shortest recording their adventure, and so went their ways.

All that Friday the unseen eye of the Admiralty had been bent upon the *Harpalion.* Naval station D having reported "Cannot find *Harpalion,*" naval station B reported "*Harpalion* picked up by *Ariel,*" and later "Abandoned by *Ariel.*" Naval station A reported "*Harpalion* being towed."

Finally, on Saturday, Lloyds reported "*Harpalion* sunk." But she had floated for fifty-five hours after having been torpedoed. So the naval officer was right in his estimate. Of that period, she was twenty-three hours derelict, thirty-one-and-a-half hours in charge of the prize crew, and a final half-hour again derelict in the storm.

VII

Netsuke

The stress of the long vigil was ended. No more the uneasy ship throbbed through the haunted twilight of dusk and dawn, the eyes upon her deck incessantly roving the restless field of sea, while the men below hearkened through the humming of the furnaces and the beat of the engines for the fatal detonation. All that fevered life was past, whelmed in the deep sea. There were left a profound silence, an immense desolation.

In the midst thereof a small, tawny figure, naked to the waist, sat cross-legged on a little raft of wreckage, one tattooed arm clasping a pole, from whose top the flag of a torn garment flew to the wind. It sat as motionless as the carved ivory it wore at its belt. But the black eyes of the Japanese were open, scanning the wide sea-line.

A little way off, now hidden by a wave from the eyes of the Japanese, now revealed, the head and shoulders of a seaman were bowed upon the stump of a broken spar.

Except for these two figures, there was nothing save broken water under the vast grey arch of the sky.

The two castaways had passed beyond thought to mere endurance. The progress of time was naught save an intensifying misery. So the hours went by, and still the Japanese sat cross-legged on his little raft, one tattooed arm clasped about the pole, his flag streaming against the inexorable grey, his black eyes open, staring at the far sea-line; while a little way off the seaman, prone upon his spar, rolled and tumbled with the swell.

So they were sighted from a steamship; so rescued. When the seaman had come to life again he said: "When the ship was struck I see the little Japanese dive clear of her. After being drawn down and coming up again, I got hold of a spar and hung on to it; and I see the little Japanese swimming about as lively as a water-chick, collecting bits of wood, gratings and what-not. As he got each piece he tied it to the rest with some line he had, though how he got it I couldn't say; and swimming on his raft, collected more pieces, and lashed the whole together till it would bear his weight. Then he steps a mast, all shipshape and Bristol-fashion, and hoists his vest for a signal of distress. All this time he looks at me now and again with a smile. I told him not to mind me, as I could hang on. Then he sits himself in the midst of his raft like an image. Clever thing as ever I see. He deserved to be saved if ever, so he did," said the British seaman.

The little Japanese smiled and said nothing.

The two shipwrecked men were landed and were taken to that admirable and invaluable institution, the Home of the British and Foreign Sailors' Society. The seaman signed on and departed in another ship, the Japanese remaining for a day or two. To him came the wife of one of the seamen who had been on board the lost ship to ask for news.

The little Japanese stood before the anxious woman, and his face was impassive, except his eyes, and his hands fluttered like birds.

"On deck," said the little Japanese, "captain —donkeyman—mate—seamen, one, two, thlee." He made a bridge of his hands, and swiftly reversed them. "Ship *so*. Captain—donkeyman —mate—seamen, one, two, thlee." He drew his hand across his throat, which clicked. "All gone." He pointed downward. "Your man too."

The woman went away. The little Japanese went to sea.

VIII

The Sole Survivor

The steamship *Tangistan,* homeward bound from the Mediterranean laden with a full cargo of iron ore, was within a tide of her port of destination, in the north. There had been no alarms during the voyage; no enemy submarine had been reported during her passage through home waters; and merchant seamen in those days did not seem to regard mines as a real danger. So that when the Irish seaman joined the watch below at midnight, he and his mates had an easy mind. The Irishman, instead of turning in, lit his pipe and, sitting on the edge of his bunk, joined in the talk, which ran on what they would do when the ship fetched up in port next day. Seamen seldom talk about the sea if they can help it. They look backward to the last spell on shore, and forward to the next, where, with a pocketful of pay, they can buy the earth for a day or two, or even (with luck) for a week.

So the watch below sat and gossiped in the hot, dense reek of the cabin, where the electric

light was hued with tobacco smoke, and the oilskins hanging on the bulkhead swayed to and fro as the vessel rolled at slow speed.

"Suddenly the ship was brought up with a great shock as if she had struck a rock, and her lights were immediately extinguished." So said the Irish seaman, afterwards.

With the rest of the men he ran up on deck, which was sinking beneath his feet. There was a swift and orderly movement in the dark, and orders were being shouted from the bridge. The Irishman went directly to his station at the port lifeboat, slung a lifebelt over his head, and unloosed one of the falls ready to lower away. Two men got into the boat; a third seaman and the Irishman lowered her; and the next thing the Irishman knew, the solid ship drew him bodily downwards and an immense weight of icy water closed over him. The Irishman, holding his breath, swam desperately upwards. He thought he would burst; he thought he would never prevail; he thought he would die; and then, with a sob, he clove the surface, and trod water, panting. Then he arranged his lifebelt properly under his arms, saw a bulk of wreckage floating, swam to it, got his leg over it, and so remained. Harsh cries rang through the dark, and the Irishman recognised the voices and lingo of the Arab firemen, and at a little distance he saw four of them clinging, like himself, to some wreckage. The ship was gone. Of all her people, himself and the four firemen were left alive.

The Irishman, clasping his spar and heaving

up and down on the long swell, felt the cold turning his very bones to ice. He had no idea how long it would be before he was numbed into unconsciousness, when his hold would be loosed and he would be drowned; but it seemed to him that he would last longer than the four unhappy children of the sun who were crying yonder. He cried out likewise, at the full pitch of his voice, and very likely the exertion helped to keep him going. But his hails sounded in his own ears little as the whining of a sea-gull, and wholly impotent to travel in the great vault of night and tossing sea. Still he called aloud, for he was in the track of steamers.

And presently he saw a steamer. She carried no lights, but he descried her form, a darker shape upon the sea and sky, and saw the sparks volley from her funnel.

He shrieked till his voice broke, but the steamer went on and vanished. The Irishman was furiously enraged; but it was of no use to be angry. He went on calling. So did the other four castaways, but their cries were growing fainter and less frequent.

Then there loomed another steamer, and she, too, went on. It seemed to the Irishman that he was doomed; but he went on calling. An Irishman dies hard. By this time perhaps an hour had gone by, and the Arab firemen had fallen silent. The Irishman could see them no longer. He never saw them again.

A third steamer hove in sight, and she, too, went on.

The Irishman cursed her with the passionate

intensity peculiar to the seaman, and went on calling. It was a desperate business now; he could not last much longer; but he would not be "bet," as he called it.

Then a fourth steamer came towering upon the night, and the Irishman bellowed like a bull. Did she hear? Not she—not listening—not caring—not likely. No—Yes! She was slowing down. There was an answering hail. Stopping. Stopped. Away boat.

Crying and calling, the Irishman sat on his spar, and heard the grunt of the oars in the rowlocks, and saw the sweep of the blades and the dim foam, and then faces bending over him with kindly speech, and he was hauled into the blessed boat and into life. He had been in the water for two hours and ten minutes. Dip your hand in next time you are on the North Sea in winter, and see what it feels like.

And next day he was in port, as he had anticipated; except that he had nothing in the world but the borrowed suit of clothes he wore, and the borrowed boots in which he trod the familiar pavement on the way to the Sailors' Home.

IX

According to Instructions

The master of the steamship *Headlands,* which was entering the western approaches of the Channel, descried a burning ship. She lay about five miles distant to the eastward, and a thick smoke ascended from the forward part of her. The master, obeying the custom of the sea, despite of peril of mine and submarine, altered course to go to the assistance of the ship overtaken by disaster.

It was then nine o'clock of a fine clear day, Friday, March 12th, 1915. Ere twenty minutes had gone by, the master saw the conning-tower and masts of a submarine, which was then some three miles away, and which was heading south, towards the *Headlands.* And then he saw, further away, a little patrol boat heading for the submarine, saw the flash of guns, and heard the distant clap of their explosion, as the patrol boat fired at long range on the submarine.

The master immediately perceived several things at once. He perceived that in all probability the burning vessel had been set on fire by the submarine; that the patrol boat was attend-

ing to the submarine, and that the *Headlands* had run into an affair from which the sooner she departed the better. So the master put his helm hard a-starboard and steered for the majestic lighthouse which towers, a white policeman with a lantern, at the sea-turning to the port.

The *Headlands* was shoving along as fast as she could go, when the master saw that the submarine was slashing along on the surface so fast that the patrol boat was being left far astern, and also that the submarine was catching up the *Headlands*. The master, like other masters since, had occasion to reflect what happens when you leave your course to help a friend in trouble. Also he had time to frame his plan of action.

He decided to run for it, to hold on, and to force the submarine to expend a torpedo before he surrendered. It might miss him. If it hit, that could not be helped. He wished the ship's bottom had been clean, when he could have got another two knots out of her. The submarine continued to gain on the *Headlands*.

The master went below, unlocked all his confidential papers, and burned them in the cabin stove, took his hand camera, and returned to the bridge.

The chase had begun at about twenty minutes to ten, and after about half an hour the submarine was within speaking distance astern, and her commanding officer was hailing the *Headlands* to stop. The master made no reply. He read the number of the submarine—"U 29" —and then he knew he was being chased by the

notorious Captain Otto Weddingen, who (it was believed) had sunk the armoured cruisers *Aboukir, Cressy* and *Hogue.* The master took a photograph of "U 29," which vessel, he afterwards reported, was "of the latest type."

Captain Otto Weddingen told the master that he would sink him in five minutes. The master, still disdaining to reply, ordered the crew to get their gear together, and held on his course.

At 10.25 the submarine fired a torpedo. It struck the *Headlands* abaft the engine-room, and she began to settle down. The submarine instantly went about and made off at full speed. The people of the *Headlands* took to their boats, whence they perceived, far away, patrol vessels which were apparently hunting the "U 29." Half an hour later the boats were taken in tow by patrols, which landed them in port at two o'clock that afternoon.

In the meantime the submarine had sped over twenty miles to the westward and had sunk another ship. The vessel to whose assistance the master of the *Headlands* had been going was still burning. She was the *Indian City,* and she sank during the afternoon of the next day. The *Headlands* was still settling down. A steamer from the port went out to her, and had towed her to within a mile of the lighthouse she had failed to reach when, at eight o'clock in the evening, down she went.

Here is the master's (unofficial) comment, which I am permitted to quote:

"I am naturally sorry that the old *Headlands* has gone, the more so as I have lost something

like £150 in stores and personal effects. Still, I have the satisfaction of knowing that to the last minute we did all possible to avoid capture by carrying out the stipulated Admiralty instructions."

As for the "U 29," a fortnight later she was reported by the British Admiralty as having been sunk with all hands.

Had the master of the *Headlands* been provided with a gun, he would have had another story to tell; such a story, for instance, as the record of the little steamship *Atalanta.*

On a wild autumn morning in the following year the *Atalanta* was pounding up the Channel against a full north-westerly gale, when the master descried a boat, now swung to the crest of a wave, the crew pulling steadily, now swallowed up from view. The master altered course to pick up the castaways, and manœuvred the steamship to put the boat under her lee. A rope was flung to the men, and they climbed on board, eleven French seamen from the sailing ship *Maréchal de Villars,* which had been sunk by an enemy submarine.

The Frenchmen were rescued at about ten o'clock on the morning of September 11th, 1916. Three-quarters of an hour later the master sighted a German submarine. Her square, slate-coloured conning-tower, rounded at the fore-end, was forging through the breaking sea, off the starboard bow of the *Atalanta,* between two and three miles distant from her.

The master of the *Atalanta* altered course to put the submarine astern, ordered full speed,

and posted the gun's crew at the gun mounted on the quarter.

The submarine fired. The range was about 5,000 yards, and the shot struck the sea short of the *Atalanta.* The submarine fired again, and again the projectile fell short. The range had decreased to about 4,000 yards, and the *Atalanta* fired at the submarine, the shot falling short of her. After an interval of five minutes the enemy fired again, and the *Atalanta* courteously replied. There was a third exchange, and then the submarine, with a parting shot, went about and headed for a steamer then visible on the horizon. The *Atalanta* went on her way. On this occasion three rounds sufficed to discourage the enemy.

X

The "Lusitania"

The fact seems to be that, in spite of their threats, no one really believed the Germans would put down the *Lusitania*. According to the evidence of surviving passengers, the twelve hundred passengers felt little apprehension. Either they had not heard of the warnings before coming on board, or, having heard these rumours, they thought nothing of them, and, in any case, they relied for their safety upon the speed of the vessel and the protection, upon approaching British shores, of British men-of-war. Thus, when the passengers went to lunch on Friday, May 7th, 1915, the south coast of Ireland being then in sight, all was as usual. So, at least, it appears; for the evidence of a few out of so many cannot be conclusive.

The purpose of the following narrative is neither to record the technical aspect of the event nor to depict its horror, but to exemplify the conduct of officers and men, in so far as it can be ascertained. Nor is it part of the author's business to reflect upon the crime of the Germans, which in this case differed only in degree and not in kind from other murders, and which will bring its own punishment in due time.

At two o'clock on that Friday afternoon a couple of able seamen went up to relieve the men keeping a look-out in the crow's-nest on the foremast. One took the port side, the other the starboard side.

The man on the port side scanned the smooth bright sea and marked the coloured cliffs of the Irish coast showing through the haze. The man on the starboard side saw the field of water stretching clear to the horizon, with here and there a distant boat.

Said port to starboard, "Anything in sight?"

To which starboard replied, "Nothing doing."

There was a few minutes' silence. Then starboard said to port:

"Good God, Frank, here's a torpedo!" And he shouted to the bridge below with all his strength.

Port, turning to his mate's side, perceived a white track lengthening swiftly from a spot some two hundred yards away from the ship. The next moment came an order from the bridge: "All hands to boat stations," and the men went down.

When the A.B. told his mate there was a torpedo coming, the master, standing outside the door of his room on the A deck, also saw the white track. The quartermaster at the wheel heard the second officer sing out, "Here is a torpedo." An able seaman on the saloon deck, looking through the port, saw a ripple on the water about 300 yards distant, then the white track, and then he saw the torpedo itself, and

cried out a warning. Three passengers, standing on the upper deck aft, and gazing out to sea, saw what they described as something like a whale or a porpoise rising out of the sea about three-quarters of a mile away, leaving a little trail of white bubbles. Then from that object they saw a white track heading towards them. At first no one spoke, though all had the same thought. Then one said, "Looks like a torpedo," and another said, "My God, it *is* a torpedo." The white track, drawing nearer to the ship, was hidden from the sight of the passengers on the upper deck high above the water, and they said that for a second they had a kind of hope it would not explode.

Another passenger saw a streak of white, as if made on the water by the tail of a fish, and then he saw a periscope. A woman said to him lightly, "It looks like a torpedo coming."

The next moment another passenger, leaning over the rail, actually saw the torpedo strike the hull between the third and four funnels. He said the sound of the explosion was like a heavy door slammed by the wind.

The master, standing outside his room, was flung to the deck by the shock, and, picking himself up, ran to the navigation bridge. As he ran he felt a second explosion. The ship was already listing to starboard. The master ordered all hands to the boats, signalled to the engine-room a preconcerted signal, but there was no answering movement of the ship. The master told the quartermaster to put his helm hard a-starboard. The quartermaster reported hard

a-starboard. The master said, "All right, boy," and told the second officer to note what list the vessel had, and the quartermaster to keep her head on Kinsale. It was the right seaman's resource to try to beach her.

The first officer was seated at lunch in the saloon when the torpedo struck. He ordered all the starboard ports to be closed, and struggled with the passengers up to the boat deck. The intermediate third officer, who was also seated at lunch in the saloon, went up to his boat station on C deck, starboard side. A second-class waiter, in his pantry, felt the ship shake heavily, saw people crowding up on deck, and went up to his boat station. The junior third officer was in the officers' smoke-room on the bridge deck. The lights went out; he ran up to the bridge, the ship leaning over, a shower of fragments falling from above the funnels, saw the white track of the torpedo, and heard the master order the swung-out boats to be lowered to the rail. The A.B. on the saloon deck who had seen the white track and shouted a warning before the torpedo struck was already at his boat station. The passengers on the upper deck were staggering to the port side, up the deck, which sloped at about the angle of an ordinary slate roof, arms clasped over their heads, pieces of the ship falling all about them, and immersed in a black cloud of smoke and water, whose vaporous outer edge shone white. Passengers were crowding on deck from below, and some of the women were weeping.

What was happening below, in the rooms and alleyways of that floating steel town?

The junior second engineer was in his cabin when he heard a grating noise, and the ship heeled over. Going out into the alleyway, he was told what had happened. Then he dressed himself, went to the lifebelt locker, served out lifebelts to passengers, thence he went to the engine-room and told the firemen to get away up through the engine-room skylight. Then, and not till then, he went up on deck to his boat station.

The second senior third engineer, on watch in the engine-room, had made out the speed of the vessel by reckoning the revolutions when the shock came. In a moment the main steam dropped to 50 lbs. The pointer on the signal dial worked from the bridge switched to full speed astern and then full speed ahead, as arranged in case of emergency to get full steam on. But there *was* no steam. The lights burned dim. The engineer officer started to go to the store to get lamps, but failing to get through the men rushing to the upper deck, he turned back to the platform in case there should be more signals. Thence he descended to the lower plates to see if the watertight doors were closed. The lights went out. Groping in darkness and alone, the engineer officer ascertained that the water-tight doors were closed, and judged that the turbines and the pumps had stopped working. Then he went up to C deck.

In the meantime the first junior third engineer, who was in No. 3 boiler-room, heard the

explosion, felt the ship's list, and closed the nearest water-tight door by hand. The forward water-tight door, starboard side, was blocked by escaping firemen. So the engineer officer ascended to the fan flats, went through the firemen's quarters and along the engine-room to his cabin on C deck, and thence to his boat station.

A leading fireman, working in No. 3 section of the port-side stokehold, felt a crash as if the ship had struck a rock. The men about him cried out, "They have got us at last," and dashed into the after stokehold. The leading fireman did not follow them. He stopped to think. Having decided what to do, he went into the next section, into which the water was flowing, and forced the water-tight door shut against the stream. Then he climbed up to the fan flats to his quarters, took a lifebelt in his hand, and went up to C deck. A passenger snatched the belt from him and ran. The fireman vaguely understood that word was being passed that the ship would not sink, and went on to his boat station.

The curt narratives of these survivors disengage a phantom vision of the stunning reality. The huge vessel, into which some two thousand souls had been decanted, is speeding on the bright sea, each of her inhabitants busy about his private concern, working the ship, tending the engines, feeding the furnaces, gossiping, dozing, caring for the children, leisurely lunching, when there comes a shock, a jar, and a trembling and the ship tips sideways, and to

every soul on board there rises the immediate prospect of death.

Death or no death, to the officers and the ship's company there is duty to be done. The master, upon whom rests the whole responsibility, gives his orders from the tilting bridge, sinking momentarily nearer the water; the quartermaster puts the wheel over; the officers, scattered about the ship, instantly do the nearest piece of work, help and encourage the passengers and go to their boats. The engineers methodically attend to the engines, while the lights burn dim and are presently extinguished. The men from the foretop, saloon, and stokehold go to their boat stations. The passengers, with one accord, are pouring up to the slanting decks, where everything is sliding and slipping. . . . According to testimony, there was very little panic, but some of the women were weeping.

The master, speaking from the bridge, had ordered the boats to be lowered to the rail; and women and children first. He saw that, owing to the heeling over of the ship to starboard, it would be dangerous to lower the port side boats to the rail, because they would swing inboard, strike the slanting deck and turn over. He saw that until the ship stopped it would be dangerous to lower the starboard side boats into the water because, owing to the way of the vessel, they might capsize. There was therefore an interval, during which officers and men strove to load the boats with passengers and get them away.

The master on the bridge knew that the engines were powerless, and that the vessel would presently stop, so that he could not beach her. The quartermaster reported that she kept paying off. The second officer, watching the ship heeling over, reported 15 degrees of list, and then an increase. The water was lipping over the starboard end of the bridge. The master told the quartermaster to save himself, and the quartermaster, having no lifebelt, waded waist-deep into the rising water, got a lifebuoy and was then washed into the sea. The master remained on the high end of the bridge.

What was happening on the tilted deck?

The first officer, who had been at lunch in the saloon, was getting people into a boat on the starboard side. By that time the ship was listing 40 degrees, and sinking by the head, and the boat was therefore hanging from the davits several feet away from the rail. The first officer, with immense difficulty, transferred about eighty persons across this chasm into the boat and then lowered the boat into the water. People were then slipping down the deck into the sea. The first officer remained in the ship, the people in the boat calling to him to come down. The forward bridge was awash, and the ship evidently sinking fast. The first officer went down the falls and dropped into the boat. Two or three minutes afterward the ship stood on her nose and went down, and the boat was dragged this way and that in the whirlpool.

The junior second engineer, coming up from directing the firemen, came to his boat on the

port side, where were some of the boat's crew and a crowd of passengers. He lowered the boat to the level of the deck and filled her with women. Then the heeling over of the vessel flung the boat inboard and capsized her on the top of her passengers. The engineer officer, hanging on to a davit, went down with the ship, and presently came up again. While the junior second engineer was hanging on the davit and the passengers were sliding from under the capsized boat down the deck and into the water, the second senior third engineer, having done all he could below, climbed over the rail on the port side and walked down the hull into the sea.

The first junior third engineer, having shut watertight doors and the like below, came up to the starboard side, where the first officer was loading his boat. The first junior third engineer took charge of his own boat. He stood by the after falls, and an able seaman stood by the forward falls. They lowered the boat to the deck and put about thirty women into her. Then they lowered the boat into the water, the junior third engineer, like the first officer, remaining in the ship. When the rail had dropped to within about ten feet above the boat, he jumped down into her, seized an oar and tried to shove off from the ship's side. A dense cloud of water mingled with soot descended, and when the engineer officer could see again, there was no ship, and the boat was swinging in the whirlpool.

When the intermediate third officer came up from the saloon, with a rush of passengers, he went to his section of boats, starboard side.

One of his boats, which had been lowered to the rail, was already full of passengers, and some aliens were trying to get on board. The officer disposed of the aliens and got the boat into the water and away. Then he got another boat away, full of passengers. He could have gone with her, but he was too late. The ship was sinking. He struggled up the steep slant of the deck to the port side, and the water caught him. He had just time to snatch the life line of a boat, when he was sucked down with the ship. When he came to the surface the ship was gone.

The second-class waiter and library steward, who had rushed on deck from his pantry, went to the after collapsible boats and tried to get them away. Failing, he cut away empty cases and lockers and hove them overboard, so that people could hang on to them. The ship sank under him.

The leading fireman, coming up from below, was carried by the crowd to the starboard side. Here he found a boat, of which the forward falls had slipped, hanging bows down. He helped to haul her level, and then helped to put women into her. As she was being lowered, a fall slipped and all the passengers were thrown into the sea. The fireman clung to a thwart of the boat, which was drawn down with the ship.

The junior third officer, coming from the bridge, went to his boat station on the deadly port side, and with an able seaman lowered his boat, which swung inboard and was useless. Then the staff captain sent him back to the bridge to tell the second officer to trim the ship

with the port tanks. The ship drawing a little nearer level, the port boats were swung clear of the rail. Then some passengers, meddling with the guys, let them go, so that the boats swung back again inboard. Amid this crowd and confusion, the ship heeling over, boats and collapsible boats beneath them, and passengers all mixed up together, the junior officer strove desperately until, the ship going down under him, he slid down to starboard, where the rail was nearly submerged, and so into the water, and was sucked down with the vessel, and came up again.

It seems that the two able seamen who had come down from the crow's-nest were also struggling to get the port side boats away. One boat, partly filled with women, was being lowered when the ship sank, and all were in the water.

The able seaman who from the saloon saw the torpedo coming and gave the alarm, being unable to get one of the starboard boats away, joined the party under the command of the first officer, and went away in his boat.

The master, on the bridge, put on a lifebelt, waited till the ship sank under him, went down with her and came up again. As the water closed about him there rang in his ears "a long, wailing, mournful, despairing, beseeching cry." So one of the passengers described the last sound to *The Times*.

He was in the water for nearly three hours when he was picked up by one of the ship's boats.

What happened after the *Lusitania* had plunged down bows first, her stern projecting almost vertically from the sea, the living within her being smashed against bulkheads by furniture and then drowned?

Amid the whirl and undulation and breaking waves of the sea were tossing men, women and children, dead and alive, boats, cases, casks, spars, wreckage of all kinds. Right in the whirlpool were the laden boats of the first officer and of the junior third engineer, and the two other boats lowered from the starboard side. It seems that only these four were safely got away filled with passengers. There were other boats floating about, and some collapsible boats. Some boats were capsized, some had people clinging to them.

The first officer, whose boat, laden with about eighty people, was tossing dangerously, ordered the passengers to sit still, and by means of good seamanship extricated his boat from danger. With him were the first junior third engineer, the able seaman from the saloon deck, and some seamen and stewards. About 600 yards away was another boat, apparently empty, to which they pulled, and found in her three men who had swum to her. The first officer transferred to this boat the first junior third engineer, whom he put in charge of her, a crew of seamen and stewards and about thirty passengers. Room was thus made in both boats for more survivors. The first officer returned to the scene of the disaster and picked up as many people as the boat would hold. Then he rowed to a fishing

smack, a distance of about five miles, and put the passengers on board her. Then he rowed all the way back again. He came upon a collapsible boat, water-logged and helpless, in which were thirty-five persons, took them on board, and transhipped them into a trawler. The trawler towed the first officer's boat back once more to the scene of the wreck, and he rescued ten persons, whom he transhipped to another vessel. By this time there were various vessels assembling; and the first officer, finding his crew exhausted by their hours of rowing a heavy sea-boat, and their intense exertions, went with them on board one of the rescuing boats, and so was taken into Queenstown.

In the meantime the first junior third engineer had been doing the like with his boat. He baled her out, picked up about twenty-four persons, and transferred them to a sailing trawler. Then he took a number of women from a collapsible boat into his own boat, the sailing trawler being fully laden. A steam trawler arrived, and the first junior third engineer put his crew and passengers on board her. The trawler supplied fresh crews for the boat and the collapsible boat, took the boats in tow, and, having rescued more people, went to Queenstown, where she arrived about half-past eight in the evening, some six hours after the disaster.

So much for the work of the boats. We learn something of what happened to the people cast upon the sea from the brief accounts of survivors, and thus picture the field of waters, strewn with wreckage and half-submerged boats

to which people are clinging, and dotted with men and women still feebly swimming and floating. . . . Here and there are trawlers and other vessels, and boats whose crews are hauling people over the side.

One of the able seamen who had been on watch in the crow's-nest, and who had been drawn down with the ship, came to the surface and seized a floating block of wood. Then he saw a woman struggling, pushed the wood over to her, and swam away to a collapsible boat. There were several people in her, one of the ship's officers among them. The able seaman climbed on board, and at once took his part in wrestling with the crank boat, which kept turning over. Again and again they righted her, but each time they were flung into the water some of the survivors were drowned. After a long time, those who remained, the sturdy A.B. among them, were picked up by one of the ship's boats.

The junior second engineer who, while trying to launch one of the port side boats, had been drawn down with the ship, came up to the surface, clutched a lifebuoy and remained floating. He floated for about two and a half hours, and then he was picked up by one of the ship's boats.

The second senior third engineer, having done all that could be done below, came up on deck to find it tilted to so steep an angle that he could not keep his footing. He climbed over the rail on the port side and walked down the sinking hull into the water. He kept himself afloat for about three hours. Then he was picked up by

one of the collapsible boats, which was partly water-logged, and thence he was transferred to a patrol boat.

The quartermaster who, after being told by the master to save himself, took a lifebuoy and was washed from the bridge, swam to a capsized boat. Seated in the keel were "two foreigners," who hauled the quartermaster alongside them. The party was rescued by a trawler.

The intermediate third officer, having helped to launch the starboard side boats, ran up the deck to the port side as the ship went down, and was carried down with her. He swam to a capsized boat, to which twenty-five persons were clinging. During the next four hours and more twenty of the twenty-five dropped off and were drowned. A trawler rescued the survivors.

The second-class waiter under whom the ship went down while he was cutting away and casting into the sea lockers and empty cases, also swam to a capsized boat and was eventually picked up.

The leading fireman, carried down on the starboard side with the boat he was trying to clear and the ship, swam to a collapsible boat. It was fortunately floating right side up; the cover was still on it; and on the cover were a coal-trimmer and a woman. They helped him on board; and the leading fireman, a person of energy and resource, got to work, cut the cover away, put the sides up, and then cruised about picking people from the water. They were presently rescued by a trawler.

The junior third officer, after his desperate efforts to get away the port side boats, had gone down with the ship. When he came up he

swam to a collapsible boat, which was partly stove in. He climbed on board her and picked up another man. The two, having managed partly to raise the sides of the boat, went in search of others. They rescued several people from the water and from a capsized boat, during two hours' hard toil. Then they came upon three persons hanging on to a bread-tank, but by that time the collapsible boat was full. The indefatigable junior third officer found an empty boat, transferred his passengers to her, then returned and took in the castaways on the bread-tank and picked out several more people floating on life-belts. He kept the two boats in company, and both were subsequently rescued.

The rescuing vessels came dropping into Queenstown as the night fell, laden with the living, the dying and the dead. During the next two days the dead were carried through the streets by stretcher-parties to the mortuaries. Here men and women walked in fear, scanning the dead faces, looking for those whom they had lost. But our affair is not with the passengers, but with the men of the merchant service, and how they discharged their duty.

It is right, however, that the remarks made by the enemy should be remembered. Said the *Cologne Gazette:* "The news will be received by the German people with undisguised gratification. . . ." Said the *Frankfurter Zeitung:* "A German war vessel sunk the ship. It has done its duty!" Said the Austrian *Neue Freie Presse:* "We rejoice over this new success of the German Navy. . . ."

So much for "the freedom of the seas."

XI

The Castaways

The master was sitting in the saloon, peacefully writing. His ship, pitching heavily in the swell, was the British steamer *Coquet,* laden with salt, which she was carrying eastward through the Mediterranean. It was eleven o'clock in the forenoon of Tuesday, January 4th, 1916. The master heard the report of a gun fired at sea. Running up to the bridge, he heard a second report, and saw a projectile speed across the bows and plunge into the water. The third officer, on watch on the bridge, told the master that the shots were fired from a submarine on the port quarter, and also that he had (he thought) sighted another submarine on the port bow. Gazing across the field of great blue hills rising and falling, at first the master could see nothing else. Then he caught side of the submarine astern, running on the surface at a good speed, something over a mile away. Another shell sang over the bridge, another passed under the stern. The master, perceiving that the attacking submarine was over-

hauling him, and having reason to suppose that another submarine was approaching, ordered the engines to be stopped, and the boats to be made ready to get away, and ran up a hoist of flags, signifying that the ship was stopped. The submarine drew nearer, flying the signal "Abandon ship." Then the master went down to his cabin, took his confidential papers and burned them in the galley fire. The officers and men were lowering the boats in a hurry, amid the babble in several languages of the crew, who were of various nationalities.

The port side lifeboat, under the command of the first officer, was got away first. The master, taking his chronometer, sextant, chart and the ship's papers, went away in the starboard lifeboat. Then the submarine opened fire again. She fired eight shots, all of which missed the ship, one severing the bridge signal halliards. The heavy swell baulked the submarine gunners.

The submarine, drawing nearer the two boats, ordered them to come alongside, a manœuvre highly dangerous with so great a sea running. And in coming alongside both boats were flung downwards upon the outer edge of the submarine's hull, which was awash, their timbers were started, and the water came in. The master was ordered on board the submarine by her commanding officer, a short, square-built man of forty or fifty with a fair moustache, speaking good English. With him were several other officers, all dressed in leather clothing, and bearing the Austrian crown in their caps. Eight or nine of the crew, wearing ordinary bluejackets' rig,

were on deck. They were secured in case of accident by lanyards fastened to their belts and attached at the other end to a wire jack-stay running fore and aft. The submarine, painted a bluish slate-colour, was not of the latest size. She bore signs of wear, carried two masts winged to the deck and lying on it, and mounted one gun, about nine feet long, forward of the conning tower.

When the two boats of the *Coquet* were dizzily rising and falling alongside the submarine, the submarine commander ordered the master to come on board. At the same time some of the submarine's crew, armed with revolvers and cutlasses, embarked in the two boats, which were sent back to the ship, leaving the master alone with his captors in the submarine.

The commander of the submarine proceeded to improve the occasion by endeavouring to elicit from the master his views on the subject of the war. The British officer, by his account of the matter, seems to have affected a dense ignorance. But the ignorance of the submarine commander was probably unfeigned, for he said:

"When you get back to London, Captain, tell Mr. Grey that if he does not want his ships sunk, to stop the war; it is only being kept on by him and the young men of England."

While the master was thus being entertained, the two ship's boats had regained the ship. The men were given twenty minutes to collect their gear, while the submarine's men set to looting the vessel. When the men of the *Coquet* were ready, they were ordered to return to the submarine. The submarine's people loaded one of

the small boats of the *Coquet* with their booty, lowered her into the water, embarked in her, and fastened two bombs on the ship's hull, under water, abreast of the holds. Then they pulled away for the submarine.

The master, stolidly parrying the questions of the submarine commander, saw two bursts of black smoke shroud the *Coquet,* and heard a double explosion. Instantly the ship began to settle by the head. He watched her sinking for several minutes, then she plunged bows down, lifted her stern high above the water, screamed like a wounded animal, and vanished. For in sinking, something caught her whistle lanyard. (It is recorded by eye-witnesses that when H.M.S. *Sultan* was wrecked in the Mediterranean many years ago, she having been abandoned at the last minute, her ensign was lowered to half-mast as she was in the act of sinking.)

The two lifeboats of the *Coquet* came alongside the submarine, both leaking badly, so that the men were baling hard. It was in these damaged craft that the submarine commander proposed to set thirty-one men adrift, many miles from land, in mid-winter, in the dangerous weather of the Mediterranean. The master remonstrated with the submarine officer, telling him plainly he was committing murder. The affair struck the submarine commander as humorous. He laughed, airily promising to send the next ship he stopped to look for the castaways. His men then robbed the *Coquet* of chronometers, sextants, charts and everything else that took their fancy. The master was or-

dered into his boat; the two boats shoved off; and the submarine got under way, steered northward, and was presently lost to sight.

So ended chapter one.

Consider the situation of these thirty-one seamen, adrift in open boats, both of which were overloaded and unseaworthy, some 300 miles from the mainland, which they could not possibly reach in less than three days and three nights, with wind and weather favourable. The chief hope was their rescue by a steamer.

There were seventeen in the master's boat, fourteen in the mate's boat. The master steered south, hoisting sail and running before the wind, a course which would take them across the track of steamers. And sure enough, after sailing all the afternoon, they sighted a ship. The mate, whose boat was between the master's boat and the distant ship, burned three red flares, and the master burned one. So the castaways stared in suspense at the prospect of their salvation. But immediately it vanished, for the steamer held on her course.

Then began one of those ordeals of the sea which go beyond the landsman's imagination to conceive. By this time the sea was running so high that it was dangerous to sail. The master lowered the sail, unshipped the mast, and put out the drogue, or sea anchor, a conical bag of sailcloth, which, towed with the open larger end towards the boat, serves to take her way off and keep her head to sea. But the sea-anchor failed of its effect, and the master towed the mast instead.

The breaking waves, and the spray driven by a pitiless north wind, soaked the castaways and chilled them to the heart. The boat was continually filling with water, so that two men must be kept baling without cessation.

The master, competent and imperturbable from first to last, organised his party. The rations were fixed at two and a half biscuits and two gills of water per man per day, and the first ration was given that night. The men took turns at the baling, two at a time. The steward, an old man and ill, was exempted. So were the four boys, who were paralysed with sea-sickness, cold and fear. So passed the night of January 4th, after the ship which might have rescued the castaways had gone on her way unheeding. There is no record of what happened in the chief officer's boat.

So, all the next day, January 5th: heavy sea, bitter wind, thirst, cold, hunger, incessant baling and the boat never less than ankle-deep in water, bale as they might. That day the carpenter managed to caulk a part of the boat with pieces of shirt. So, all the night of the 5th, and the early morning of the 6th.

When the darkness began to thin the master, as his boat rose to the crest of a wave, made out a dark object in the distance away to leeward, and thought it might be a steamer proceeding without lights. He burned a flare, which was immediately answered by another, and presently, not a steamer but the first officer's boat hove nearer. When the first officer came within speaking distance, the master told him to keep

far apart, in order to increase the chance of sighting a steamer. The first officer steered away, and gradually drew further off during the day. As darkness closed in on the third day, those in the master's boat lost sight of the first officer's boat. She was never seen again.

That night, the night of January 6th-7th, the sea rose higher, so that the master trailed a leaking oil-bag to allay the breaking of the waves. The night was worse than the day, because during the day there was a chance of sun. But, save for an occasional watery ray, there never was any sun.

The misery of the castaways was hourly intensifying. The master and several others suffered piercing pains in their joints. One of the four boys, a little Italian mess-room waiter, cried all night long in his sleep with the pain. So passed the day of the 7th and the following night.

On the morning of the 8th wind and sea went down a little. The master reckoned that by this time he had run right across the track of steamers; he perceived that it was impossible, in that weather, to return upon his course; and he decided to steer south for the African coast. At first they did better; then the wind backed to west-north-west, making it difficult to keep the course.

All that night, and all the day following (the 9th), the wind kept backing to the south-west, the boat making more and more leeway. Still the master sailed her indomitably. The allowance of water had been slightly increased, because

the continual driving of the salt spray gave the men an intense thirst. But the water was running short. Towards evening, the master, unable any longer to steer south, was forced to steer south-east. So he held desperately on till midnight. And then he descried, looming through the wintry dark, land.

Almost at the same moment, with that perversity which lends to fortune an expression of blind malignity, the wind blew harder and shifted into the south, dead ahead, and scourged the water into the vicious short sea of the Mediterranean. The master, numbed and suffering, but unbeaten, reefed down and held on. But so heavy were wind and sea that presently he was compelled to lower the sail, unship the mast, heave it overboard with a couple of oars lashed to it, and tow it, to serve as a sea-anchor. In this near hopeless trim they pitched and rolled, baling all the while, for three or four hours. Then, as the light of day began to glimmer over the desolate sea, the wind and sea went down somewhat. The master shipped the mast again, and again hoisted sail, and began to beat to windward. To and fro they shoved, gaining perhaps a few yards when they went about, the heavy boat making leeway for all they could do, the wind pushing them off the desired shore. So, all day. Beating up against a head wind is a heavy, weary job enough with a fresh crew, plenty of time and no anxiety. What was it to these castaways, sliding back and forth in sight of the mocking shore?

But they drew nearer in spite of all; and as

the chance of salvation grew, the wind dropped, until they could no longer keep steerage way in the boat. But by this time the shore was in clear view, sloping down to a little bay, and, beyond, buildings rose upon the grey sky. The master lowered sail, and ordered the men to row. It was the last effort. The crew were so exhausted they could scarce get way on the boat, and all the while two of them must keep baling, crouching under the moving oars as best they could.

They drew near the rocky shore, where a heavy sea was running, and the boat was filled with water, so that they must haul off and bale her out. This happened twice. Then they got the boat into shallow water, tumbled out of her, and made her fast.

The master sent a couple of men to look for water, made the boat secure for the night, and, stiff and aching, his legs bending under him, explored the haven to which he had so dreadfully come. In the face of the low cliffs closing in the bay were the dark mouths of caves. Looking into these, the master perceived wet and a lamentable stench. Ascending the cliffs, he found what he had thought to be a village was a heap of ancient ruins. The master decided that it was best to sleep on the sand of the bay, which, he hoped, might hold some warmth of the day's sunlight.

But when they lay down in their wet clothes the sand struck chill and wet. Ere they lay down, they made a meal of limpets plucked from the rocks, biscuit, and water from a well found by the two men. They slept, the master, the

second officer, and the two engineers keeping watch by turns, as miserable a party as the stars looked down upon that night. They had lost their ship on the 4th; it was now the 10th; six days and nights they had tossed and suffered, starved, athirst and deadly cold; and now they were flung upon the edge of the desert, solitary and savage.

So ended chapter two.

The master, upon whom hung the lives of all, awoke at daybreak and, aching in every bone, reflected upon the situation. It appeared to him that the place where they were, being provided with water to drink and shellfish for food and the materials for shelter, should serve as a base until he could discover the nearest port of civilisation.

Breakfast of shellfish, biscuits and water was served out. The master instructed the second officer to get the boat baled out, listed over and repaired if possible, and to clean out one of the caves and to light a fire in it. The wind had dropped; there was a flat calm; and to get anywhere by rowing was merely impossible. So the master, with three men, set forth to try to find a man or a town. The country was all mud and great stones and hills of loose sand, so that the pioneers, whose legs were near paralysed, stumbling and falling, endured the most frightful toil. It takes a deal to kill the British seaman. After all they had suffered, with scarce a flicker of life alight in them, these four started on a long march. They struggled on in that savage wilderness for some hours, and then, as though

appearing out of the earth, there stood before them a lone Arab of great stature. The master could make nothing of his talk; but he seemed friendly, and together they retraced the weary way to the camp.

When they arrived, one of the firemen, a Greek, acted as interpreter. It appeared that the tall Arab proposed that the party should embark in their boat and let him pilot them to the nearest port. But the second officer now reported that the boat was damaged beyond repair. The planks on either side the keel were smashed to pieces, and the water came in faster than it could be baled out. Then the helpful Arab suggested that the master should march with him across country to the nearest town. But the master was done. He had been walking for six or seven hours already. So he sent two Greek firemen with the Arab. One of the Greeks spoke Arabic, so that he could converse with the guide; the other knew Italian. As the castaways were in Italian territory, the Greek could explain the case. The Greeks were told to ask for a boat to be sent to rescue the party. So they departed with the Arab into the desert.

The fifteen men left behind began to reckon upon the coming of that vessel in the morning. A fire of driftwood was blazing in the cave; the people had dried their clothes; and, although the floor was wet and hard, at least there was a fire, and a part of their bodies was warmed.

Next morning, the 12th, after breakfast, some of the men went away to wash in the muddy water of a little river flowing into the sea near

by. All kept an eager eye lifting to seaward, looking out for the rescuing vessel. It was nearly ten o'clock, and the master was just going down to the river to wash, when there rang the crack of rifles, and bullets sang about the rocks.

Silhouetted against the sky on the top of a little hill were the dancing and gesticulating figures of two Arabs. They were laughing and shouting; and the master, conceiving the fusillade to be no more than an expression of Bedouin humour, wisely decided to take cover while it lasted. Down by the water's edge was a line of ruins, beneath which ran a dry ditch, closed at one end by the sea. The master ordered the men into the ditch, and with his customary forethought saw that they took with them a bucket of drinking water.

The two Arab sportsmen presently disappeared, but the master still kept his party under cover. The two Arabs must have been scouts, for after about half an hour fifteen Bedouin, armed with rifles, leaped shouting upon the bank of ruins, and burst into a torrent of unintelligible speech. Two Arabs covered the master with their rifles. He held up his hands, showing that he was defenceless, whereupon one of the marauders, standing within six feet of the master, drew a bead on him. The master ducked as the Arab pulled the trigger; the bullet cut through the flesh of the master's bent shoulders, and the shock of the blow knocked him backwards. The back of his head struck the sand, and he lost consciousness.

When he came to himself, there was no sound save the groaning of a man in pain. The master, getting dizzily to his feet, the blood flowing from his wound, which hurt him exceedingly, perceived the carpenter, writhing on the ground near the waters edge. The man was horribly wounded; he implored the master to drag him away from the water. The master, in spite of the pain of his wound, tried to move the man, but he was too heavy.

In the sea close by, the body of the steward was floating, face downwards. Further up the trench lay the little Italian messroom boy, he who had suffered so dreadfully in the boat. But all was over for the little Italian, in this world.

The master, from where he was, could see none other of his party. He kept his gaze to seaward, passionately expecting, in this last extremity, the boat for which the two Greeks had gone with the friendly Arab. Now and again he gave the carpenter water to drink.

So he waited, in company with two dead and one dying. And then at last he beheld the smoke of a steamer, and a little after made out the Italian colours she was flying. She rounded into the bay; away came a boat crammed with soldiers; the master tottered out from his ditch, and the first thing he saw was another sailor, a coloured man, lying prone and bleeding on the sand. He was still alive, and he told the master that the Bedouin had shot and bayoneted him and left him for dead, and that they had carried away the rest of the crew.

The soldiers, landing, spread out in pursuit

of the Arabs; but these savages were out of sight. The Italian officer in command conveyed the master, the two wounded men and the two dead on board the steamer. The carpenter died while his wounds were being dressed. There were then left alive the master and the coloured seaman.

The Italians took the living and the dead to their military post. The master and the seaman were placed in the military hospital. The bodies of the two men and of the little Italian were buried with full military honours. Throughout, the master and the seaman received the greatest kindness from the Italians.

The master recovered and returned to England. He gave an admirable account of his adventures to the Imperial Merchant Service Guild, which was published in *The Times* of March 30th, 1916, and upon which the present writer has largely drawn in framing his narrative.

XII

Down in Five Minutes

The business of a gunner is to stick to his gun. When the torpedo exploded below in the stokehold, the Royal Marine Artilleryman in charge of the gun on deck "brought the gun to the 'ready' and had a good look round." But he could see nothing to shoot at; nothing but the long, ragged swell of the Eastern Mediterranean. The ship was heeling over; it was impossible to train the gun; so the Royal Marine, with his brother gunner, ran to a boat which was filled with passengers, and tried to lower her. But the list of the ship, as she lay down on her side, capsized the boat. The two Marines, perhaps remarking that it was time to get out and walk, slid into the water and swam about until they were picked up by one of the ship's boats. Thirty hours they were adrift; and then they were rescued by one of his Majesty's ships, and were thence transferred to a battleship; "Gunner —— and self remaining on board H.M.S. —— awaiting further orders."

So ended the voyage of the two R.M.L.I.'s on board the Royal Mail steamer *Persia*.

On Thursday, December 30th, 1916, she was in the Mediterranean, proceeding eastwards, carrying 503 persons, of whom 186 were passengers. The crew consisted of 81 Europeans and 236 natives. At ten minutes past one, without sign or warning, the *Persia* was torpedoed and sank in four to five minutes.

The second officer, on watch on the bridge, did indeed catch a glimpse of the wake of a torpedo, but before he could lay hand on the wheel to put the helm over, came the explosion. The torpedo struck the ship on the port side, burst in the stokehold, exploded a boiler, killed the engine-room staff, and blew a large hole in the hurricane deck. Immediately the ship began to lie down on her port side.

She was thus rapidly heeling over when the second officer, trying to sound the emergency signal on the whistle, found all the steam had gone. He then perceived the situation, which was, in brief, that the ship was sinking; that while she was sinking she was still moving forward with her own impetus; that her motion would make the operation of lowering boats difficult and dangerous; but that as there was no steam she could not be stopped.

The second officer realised these things as he sprang down to the lower bridge, where was the master. The master ordered him to get the boats away. The second officer dashed to the two boats on the poop. During the minute or two which had elapsed since the explosion, these were already loaded with women and children and a few of the crew. The second officer, work-

ing with furious energy, got both boats lowered. One floated clear. The other, as the ship continued to lean over, was actually pressed down by the davits, with the weight of the ship behind them. There was no more to be done with it. By this time the deck was nearly perpendicular. The second officer struggled to two boats secured inboard, and swiftly loosened the gripes. Then he scrambled up to the starboard side, and tried to lower a boat. As in the case of the *Lusitania,* the boat swung inboard. All these things did the second officer in four or five minutes. Then the ship sank under him.

The second officer swam to a boat and climbed in. She was one of the inboard boats he had cast loose. The second officer took to the oars and picked people out of the water.

The chief officer was in his cabin when he felt the impact of a heavy blow upon the ship, and the next moment, with a great sound, everything leaped from the bulkheads and fell about his ears. One moment he stood dazed; the next he caught up a lifebelt and an axe, and ran up to the tilting boat deck shouting "Port boats." He saw the second officer getting away the boats on the poop; perceived that the ship was sinking so rapidly that there would be no time to load the boats; and decided to get them away in order to employ them afterwards in saving people in the water. Under his orders the boats were flung loose, the chief officer using his axe. Then, like the second officer, he slid into the water and swam. He was picked up by a boat which already contained over thirty persons.

Then he rescued more people, until his boat was so overloaded that he transferred several persons to the second officer's boat.

No one seems to know what became of the master, except that he went down with his ship.

What of the passengers, among whom were women, children and soldiers?

One of the passengers, a civil servant, made an illuminating statement. He was travelling with a friend, and it seems that both men had in mind the possibility of submarine attack. The evening before the disaster the two men stood looking up at the boat to which they were allotted in case of emergency, slung to its davits above them, thoughtfully contemplating its attachments, and they remarked to each other that one of the securing pins was rusted into its socket.

Next day the civil servant was in his cabin, washing his hands before going to lunch, when there came the explosion. A confusing sense of stress and hurry instantly took him, but he acted coolly enough. He snatched his lifebelt, and quitted his cabin to go on deck. There was a lady standing motionless. He spoke to her, but she did not answer. He forced his lifebelt upon her, and ran back to his cabin to fetch his life-saving jacket. On his way up to the deck he received an impression of women and children huddled together in the corridors, and on the companion ladders, and some were moaning or crying out. Then there emerged from the hurried confusion another motionless figure of

a lady, a Frenchwoman. The civil servant seized her, and somehow dragged her up the stairs. On deck someone took the lifebelt from her nerveless hand, put it about her, and pushed her into the water, whence she was afterwards rescued. The civil servant remembers seeing a steward carrying two babies. Coming to his boat on the port side, the civil servant found his friend in her, with another man, the carpenter and a seaman. Two aft and two forward, they were trying to lower the boat. The rusted pin had jammed. The friend cried out for an axe. The civil servant, climbing into the boat, caught up a broken oar and passed it to his friend, who knocked out the pin with it.

Then the boat, being on the port side, which was sinking into the water, swung violently outboard and back again, striking the ship's side, and pitching one man into the sea.

At the same time the next boat was being lowered, full of people, when the falls parted at one end, and the boat dropped perpendicular to the water, so that all the people were spilt into the sea. The falls parted at the other end of the boat, which then dropped on a level keel into the water, whence people struggled into her. While they were climbing in, another boat descended on the top of them, and thence into the water, so that people were crushed between the two boats.

The civil servant's boat was cast loose, and the painter cut with a pocket knife, and then, as the boat was sucked right across the ship's stern, the ship went down. Those in the boat

sat helpless, their craft whirling in the smooth swell of the suction.

They got out the oars and picked people from the water, until there were nearly fifty on board, five of whom were women. The civil servant remembers seeing a clergyman of his acquaintance, swimming steadily, and appearing perfectly composed. They were unable to reach him. He also saw two capsized boats, on one of which were two Lascars, and on the other several Lascars.

The chief officer's boat and the second officer's boat joined company with the boat in which was the civil servant, and also with a fourth boat, which was also filled with survivors, and the chief officer took command of the flotilla. He ordered the boats to sail or row back to the place of the wreck, in order to look for more survivors. But the wind was against them; they could make no way; and they were blown in the opposite direction.

It seems that two or three small vessels were sighted during the afternoon. At nightfall the chief officer anchored. After dark the castaways saw the lights of a steamer and burned flares, but the steamer went on. The next morning they saw a large vessel, and the second officer went away under sail to cross her course, but the ship, doubtless suspecting a trick of an enemy submarine, altered course and went on.

The people in the boats tossed and drifted in the sun and the heavy weather all that day. For food they had biscuits and for drink water. That night they again saw the lights of a ship

and again burned flares. They saw the green light and then the red light glowing in a line, and knew that she was heading towards them.

The lack of an officer to command the civil servant's boat nearly resulted in the loss of all on board, for as the ship drew nearer the passengers all stood up, and the boat, turning broadside to the swell, was in imminent danger of capsizing.

The rescuing ship was one of his Majesty's destroyers.

In the fifth boat, which was separated from the others, was Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, who contributed an interesting account of his adventures to *The Times* of January 19th, 1916.

Lord Montagu went down with his ship, came up, swam to a capsized boat and climbed on the keel. Clinging to the boat were many native seamen and a few Europeans. Several presently dropped off and sank. The boat righted herself on a wave, and the survivors climbed into her. She was badly damaged; her bows were split, there was a hole in her bottom, her air-tanks were broken; and the men sat with the water to their knees. Every now and then she capsized in the swell. Several more of the native crew died from exhaustion. There was no water, nor any food except a few spoiled biscuits; and these were not discovered until the castaways had been thirty hours without sustenance.

At night Lord Montagu saw the ship which the other boats' crews saw, and also the ship they sighted next morning. During the rest of the day nothing appeared; and by the evening Lord Montagu told his friend that there was

no hope, and his friend agreed. Lord Montagu records that he was oppressed by an immense drowsiness, which he was only just able to resist. But he fought against the sleep which, he believed, was death, because he intended to hold out to the last.

About eight o'clock they saw a light, which they took at first to be a star. Then they descried the port and starboard lamps of a steamer, and all shouted together. The ship stopped, drew on again, there came a hail from her bridge, and her whistle was blown. When the officers of the vessel perceived the plight of the men in the boat, which was now "like a crushed eggshell," they brought the ship alongside, rove bowlines through a purchase, and hoisted the helpless castaways on board. So they were saved by the men of the merchant service.

Of the 503 persons on board, 334 were lost, and 169 were saved. Among the lost were 121 passengers, 166 native crew, 47 European crew. Among the saved were 65 passengers, 70 native crew, 34 European crew; and their salvation was due in the first instance to the promptitude, skill and resource of the ship's officers, who had only four minutes in which to do everything.

XIII

The Raider

I

Gathering Them In

This is the story of some of the British seamen captured by the German commerce-destroyer *Moewe,* whose other name was *Ponga,* commanded by Count Dohna. That officer would seem to have studied the methods and the code of the late Captain Raphael Semmes of the *Alabama,* the daring and punctilious privateersman who, in the American Civil War, inherited the traditions of the war of 1812 and of the Napoleonic *guerre de course* preceding that campaign. As for the British seamen, I do but tell their own story. Count Dohna had the upper hand—there is no denying it; and the British masters had to swallow their gruel. Resistance was useless; even so, the master of the *Clan Mactavish* fought, as you shall hear.

On Tuesday, January 11th, 1916, the cargo-boat *Corbridge* was steaming nine knots in the North Atlantic in fine, clear weather. About

two o'clock in the afternoon the master sighted a vessel coming up astern, about five miles away. She was flying the red ensign and there was nothing remarkable about her. The master observed that she was gradually overhauling the *Corbridge;* then, at a quarter to four, he noticed that the stranger suddenly altered her course, steering towards another vessel, which was steaming in the opposite direction, some three miles away on the port bow. By this time the wind had freshened, and the sea was getting up, and now and again a rain-squall blotted out the two ships. As the squall blew away the master of the *Corbridge* saw the flash of guns and heard their reports, and perceived that the vessel first sighted was firing upon the steamer coming towards her.

The master then understood that the strange vessel which had turned away from him was a German. There was nothing to do but to hold on his course with all speed, gaining what start he could while the enemy was engaged with the other ship. It was then four o'clock; the dusk was gathering; and if he could keep on for another hour, when it would be dark, he might escape.

What was happening on board the ship attacked? She was the *Farringford.* When her master sighted the stranger at a quarter to four the stranger was flying the signal "What ship is that?" The master of the *Farringford* made no reply. Then the stranger hoisted "Stop. Abandon ship." The master of the *Farringford,* perceiving that the stranger, now within a quarter of a mile, was training guns

upon the *Farringford,* stopped. Up went the German ensign, and there came a hail, "Abandon ship at once."

The master of the *Farringford* ordered the boats to be got away, secured his confidential papers, weighted them with a lead sinker, and hove them overboard. The crew had no time to collect their effects. They hurried into the boats, one able seaman breaking his leg in the process. There were twenty-two British and one Norwegian; and, although they were under the guns of the German, they were perfectly cool and steady. The master left his ship last; and as the boats pulled clear the Germans opened fire upon her.

The master was taken up on the bridge of the German. By this time the two ships were no more than a hundred yards apart; five or six shots had been fired, and the master witnessed the discharge of a torpedo. It broke surface, swerved to the right, and passed about thirty feet ahead of the *Farringford.* But she was already sinking by the stern when the master was ordered below.

The injured seaman had been taken to the sick bay, and the master found the rest of the crew on the between-deck, under an armed guard.

But before he went below, and afterwards, when he was allowed on deck, the master of the *Farringford* took careful note of the German ship. His observations and the observations of other British captains, may here be given.

The vessel was painted black. Apparently her original colour was white, as one of the mas-

ters noticed that there was a streak of white at the water-line. The master of the *Farringford* thought the original colour was slate. Showing through the final coat of paint were the blue and yellow stripes of the Swedish colours, which had apparently been blazoned for purposes of disguise. The name on the seamen's cap-ribbons were of various vessels, the name *Moewe* being carried by the greater number. In the chart-house, under the displacement scale, the name *Ponga* was printed. All the masters refer to the ship as The Raider.

The Raider was an armed merchant ship, cunningly altered at once to serve and to conceal her purpose. Her bulwarks were raised to the height of the poop deckhouse, and the passage between the bulwarks and the deckhouse on either side was decked over, and closed by doors, from which 18-inch-gauge tram-lines ran to the torpedo-tubes abaft the foremast. On the deck above the poop, where the hand steering wheel would be, was a gun cased in canvas. In front of it was a dummy steering wheel. So far as can be made out from the reports, the real wheel was fixed in the roof of the deckhouse, in the space between the roof and the new deck, in which a hatch opened, through which appeared the helmsman's head.

High bulwarks closed in the upper deck, and in these hinged flaps or ports of sheet-iron concealed the upper deck guns. When the guns were manned, the ports dropped outwards.

There were two guns under the forecastle, supposed to be 4.1-inch; two larger guns, one on either side, under the break of the forecastle;

one gun, also supposed to be a 4.1-inch, on the poop, as already described, and, so far as could be discovered, two guns under the poop. Total, seven guns. Abaft the foremast, between foremast and bridge, were two 18-inch torpedo-tubes. Two torpedoes in boxes were placed between number 1 and number 2 hatches. The after-end of the hatches had been taken out, the coamings raised to three feet, and in this shelter were stowed five more torpedoes in cases.

The use of the tram-lines was not discovered; but it was surmised that they were part of the mine-dropping gear, the mines being stowed under the poop.

There were two derricks, and two derricks on the mainmast. There was a wireless equipment.

The Raider was fitted with a single screw, and her extreme speed was estimated at 14—15 knots. The crew was estimated to number something under 300 men.

The personal appearance (though not the manners) of the commander of this remarkable vessel escapes us.

The first officer, Lieutenant Robert Kohlen, is described in true seaman's fashion as 5 feet 8 inches, fair, long face, twenty-eight years of age, clean shaven, refined. Another officer, as stout, twenty-eight years of age, clean shaven, flushed countenance.

Another officer, one Kohl, known as "the technical officer," or, quaintly, as the "explosives expert," seems to have been a talker. He boasted that he had invented the mine which blew up H.M.S. *King Edward VII.*

Lieutenant Berg, described as a most courteous officer, sharp-featured, with a small black moustache, was subsequently placed in command of the prize crew in the *Appam*.

There seem to have been four lieutenants and a doctor besides the captain and first officer. Officers and men wore German naval uniform.

Such was the ship, such were the officers, as observed by various British masters and men under painful conditions.

While the master and the crew of the *Farringford* were sitting under the armed guard on the 'tween-decks of the Raider, the *Corbridge* was desperately piling on coal in the hope of escaping a like catastrophe, or, for aught her people knew, worse. Within half an hour after she had sighted the *Farringford* and saw the Raider's attack, the *Corbridge* was spurred by a shot, whistling over her funnel. During the next three-quarters of an hour projectiles arrived at intervals, the Raider, which was overhauling her quarry, being then three or four miles astern. At ten minutes past five, the master of the *Corbridge* stopped. By this time it was dark, and it was impossible to discern what colours the strange vessel was flying.

But the master of the *Corbridge* had been under the stranger's fire; he had seen her attack, and conjectured that she had sunk another vessel; and he knew that the stranger's speed was superior to his own. It was clear, therefore, that the stranger was an armed German cruiser; that she could sink the *Corbridge* at anything up to five miles' range; and that she could

close on the *Corbridge* at will. He could not fight the German, not having the wherewithal, nor could he perceive any reasonable chance of escape. He was confronted with the inevitable. So he stopped and accepted it with the seaman's stoicism.

A signal lamp winked a question upon the dark: "What ship?" The master signalled "*Corbridge.*" Then the stranger flashed "German cruiser. Abandon ship immediately."

The master made his preparations accordingly. Half an hour later a boat drew alongside, and a German officer with an armed party climbed on board. The officer took the ship's papers and the master's chronometer, for which he kindly gave the master a receipt, and ordered him to go on board the German ship, with his crew.

The ship's company of the *Corbridge* numbered twenty-six; of which thirteen were British, two were naturalised British, three were Finns, four were Greeks, three were Scandinavians, and one was a Spaniard.

The German officer seems to have called for volunteers to serve under him, for eight of the foreign seamen agreed to sign on for two pounds a month more than they had been receiving from the owners of the *Corbridge.* The four Greeks, the three Scandinavians, and the Spaniard remained in the *Corbridge* in the German service, to work the ship with the German prize crew. The master, and eighteen of the crew, went on board the Raider, taking such personal effects as they could carry. The German officer sent some of the *Corbridge's* live stock to the Raider.

To the master of the *Farringford,* then, sitting on the dark 'tween-decks with his crew, entered the master of the *Corbridge* with his men. What they said to one another is not recorded. Probably "Up against it, then?" and probably they proceeded to exchange narratives.

At some period of the sojourn of the master of the *Corbridge* in the Raider, the pleasant officer called the Explosives Expert showed to the master a box containing bombs, possibly hand-grenades, which, said the Explosives Expert, would be used were any attempt made by the captives to take the Raider.

For the time being the Raider and the *Corbridge* proceeded in company. On that Tuesday, January 11th, 1916, the Raider thus set two ships to her score.

On the following day, Wednesday, at five o'clock in the afternoon, the *Corbridge* parted company.

The captives were allowed to come on deck for exercise for two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon, unless another vessel was sighted, when they were kept below. Each man had mattress and blankets. For breakfast, they had brown bread and butter and tea; for lunch, soup; for tea, more brown bread and butter and tea; for supper, nothing. The bread is said to have been good, other victuals not so good, but sufficient. They were furnished with tin plates, spoons and cups.

On Thursday, January 13th, the second day after the taking of the *Corbridge* and *Farringford,* about noon, the captives heard the report

of a gun overhead. Was another hapless British ship being held up? They waited. Presently they heard three distant blasts of a steam whistle, and after an interval down to the 'tween-decks came twenty men from the *Dromonby*. A little later, down came the master.

The master told his story. It was the usual story. He was steaming at eight knots when he sighted a ship off the starboard bow. She was flying no colours. She hoisted the signal "What ship?" To which the *Dromonby* replied, giving her name. Then, "Stop and abandon ship." Up went the German ensign, and a shot cried over the *Dromonby*. The report of the gun fetched the master out of his cabin to the bridge, whence he beheld an armed ship close to. The master put the *Dromonby* astern and blew three blasts on the whistle. The master ordered the crew into the boats, burned his confidential papers, and stood by his ship. A boarding party from the Raider came on board and searched the ship. They were looking for a gun, for which the ship was fitted, but which was not there. The Germans were very anxious about that gun. They opened the sea-cocks, placed three bombs in the ship's vitals, and returned to the Raider, carrying the master with them.

While he was relating these matters to his fellow-prisoners, there came the muffled sound of three distant explosions, and the crack of three gunshots fired overhead. And that was the end of the *Dromonby*.

Our friend the Explosives Expert afterwards

told the master of the *Dromonby* that the Raider carried six-inch guns. But the master's observation of the ammunition did not confirm the statement of the Explosives Expert.

That Thursday was a busy day for the Raider. She was picking ships from the Atlantic trade route from morn to night.

At about five in the afternoon the prisoners below heard a clatter and a running to and fro on deck, and the splash of boats going away. Another ship? They waited and listened, until down came the master and the ship's company of the *Author,* eleven British and forty-seven Lascars.

The master of the *Author* told his story. It was the same in substance as the others. But he mentioned that the German officer in command of the boarding party returned to the master his chronometer, saying that he did not desire personal property. In respecting private property the German officer followed the code of Captain Raphael Semmes; but in respect of the chronometer, there was a difference, for Semmes used to collect chronometers. The *Alabama* was stocked with them. The German officer kept a bull-dog which was a passenger in the *Author,* but the bull-dog was really cargo. He also took food, live-stock, the ship's instruments, and the boats. The Raider then sank the *Author.* The forty-seven Lascars were berthed aft, put to work, and were ultimately retained by the Raider.

The master of the *Author* came on board the Raider about five o'clock on that Thursday,

joining the mess of the masters of the *Farringford, Corbridge,* and *Dromonby.* Two hours later the master of the *Trader* was added to the party. He saw his ship sunk while he was in his boat, pulling across to the Raider. The *Trader* was laden with sugar. Her crew consisted of twenty-two British, six Swedes, one Norwegian, one Russian, one Malay and one American; all came on board the Raider, and all lacked their personal effects, which they had no time to collect.

On the following day, Friday, January 14th, 1916, nothing happened.

On Saturday, 15th January, the game began early, with the arrival on board at seven in the morning of the master and ship's company of the *Ariadne.* The Raider was becoming crowded, having on board by this time the officers and men of the *Farringford, Corbridge, Dromonby, Trader* and *Ariadne,* like a new house-that-Jack-built. But relief was on its way, as the German officers (according to their own statement) knew.

II

The Taking of the "Appam"

On that Saturday the *Appam,* homeward-bound, was steering to pass 100 miles west of Cape Finisterre. She was an Elder Dempster liner of 4,761 tons net, carrying a crew numbering about 144, and 158 passengers, including naval and military officers, and ladies, and some German prisoners. She also carried bullion to

the value of £36,000. She was fitted with wireless and mounted a gun.

At about half-past two in the afternoon the second officer, who was on watch, perceiving a cargo-boat of unusual appearance approaching, altered course to turn away from her. The stranger immediately made a signal ordering the *Appam* to stop, and her wireless operator to cease sending. The master, going on the bridge, and perceiving the stranger to hoist the German ensign, obeyed. The Raider fired a shot across the bows of the *Appam* and then across her stern, approached, and lowered a boat with an officer and armed crew on board. She was within 200 yards of the *Appam,* her shutters dropped and her guns visible. The master described this spectacle as "a great shock" to him, as no doubt it was.

The officer and men boarded the *Appam,* to the intense interest of the passengers. Lieutenant Berg, the German officer in command, went up on the bridge and conversed with the master. The lieutenant courteously requested all information concerning the ship; ordered the purser to bring to him the ship's papers, put the master under arrest, and told him to pack his things and repair aboard the Raider, taking with him the officers and the deck hands.

Thus did the master join his colleagues in the Raider that Saturday afternoon.

In the meantime a naval seaman on board the *Appam* called for volunteers, and led them to dismantle the gun. They managed to dislocate

part of the gear when the Germans stopped them, and hove the gun overboard.

The women on board, perceiving the Raider, put on life-belts, a precaution which pained Lieutenant Berg, who addressed them with utmost politeness.

"It hurts me," said Lieutenant Berg, "to see you ladies in these things. Please take them off. You will be quite safe. We are not going to sink a ship with women on board."

That chivalrous officer had indeed other uses for the *Appam,* which was to serve as escort to the Raider. Lieutenant Berg proceeded to make his arrangements. He took from arrest the German prisoners on board, armed them, and, to their deep disgust, put them on guard duty. He presented to the civilian passengers of military age a form of declaration that they would not take up arms against Germany or her Allies during the war, and requested them to sign it. One man, who refused, was sent on board the Raider. The bullion on board was transferred to the Raider. The naval and military passengers on board the *Appam,* the naval ratings, and Sir Edward Merewether, ex-Governor of Sierra Leone, were transferred to the Raider.

The master of the *Appam,* coming on board the Raider, remarked that her crew were painting her upper works white, and that her hull was black, the paint being still wet. The captain of the Raider informed the master that if the *Appam* had attempted to escape or to use her wireless, she would have been sunk. Then

the master was sent below, where he found his fellow captains, crowded together in the foul and airless 'tween-decks.

For the time being the *Appam,* in charge of Lieutenant Berg and a prize crew, remained in company with the Raider.

The next day, Sunday, January 16th, in the late afternoon, the master and some of the other prisoners in the Raider were on deck, when they perceived smoke on the horizon. They were promptly ordered below. The Raider increased her speed. The ship sighted was the famous *Clan Mactavish.*

III

The Fight of the "Clan Mactavish"

The Raider was keeping the *Appam* in company, under the command of Lieutenant Berg with a prize crew, so that in attack both ships could be employed. The Germans had dismounted the gun on board the *Appam,* but the prize crew were armed; and, for all that the ship attacked could tell, both ships carried guns. When, for instance, the *Clan Mactavish* was attacked, the master had to reckon with the possibility of the second ship in sight also opening fire, a circumstance which should be remembered.

Thus, at half-past four on that fine Sunday afternoon, the chief officer of the *Clan Mactavish* sighted two steamers some distance away on the port side. Both were steering the same course. About half an hour later the chief offi-

cer noticed that one ship altered course towards him, while the other made as if to pass astern of him, though, as he subsequently discovered, her real intention was to head him off. At half-past five the third officer came on the bridge, and the chief officer pointed out to him the two steamers, among others which were then in sight. Twenty minutes later, when it was falling dusk, as one of the suspicious vessels was rapidly closing the *Clan Mactavish,* she called up the *Clan Mactavish* by a Morse lamp, and was answered. Then the stranger signalled "What ship is that?"

At this point the chief officer reported the situation to the master, who ordered that no reply should be made. The stranger repeated her question. The master then signalled back "Who are you?" to which the stranger replied, "*Author,* of Liverpool" (that vessel had been sent to the bottom on the preceding Thursday). The master in return signalled "*Clan Mactavish.*" Then the stranger, who by this time was abaft the beam of the *Clan Mactavish,* signalled "Stop at once. We are a German cruiser. Don't use wireless."

The master of the *Clan Mactavish* acted instantly. He ordered the engine-room staff to give all possible speed and the wireless operator to send out the ship's call letters and her position. Then he ran to look out the code signals he wanted.

The Raider dropped her gun-screens and opened fire at a range of about 300 yards. The second shot entered the steward's room on the

port side, bursting on contact and blowing to pieces the steward's room and the second officer's room.

At this moment the master was busy looking out signals; the firemen below were piling on coal; the wireless operator was sending continuously; the gunner was standing by the bridge and asking for orders, while the Raider went on firing. The chief officer went to the master, who told him to reply to the enemy, whereupon the gunner opened fire upon her, the apprentice running to and fro with ammunition.

It was a short action and a sharp. The Raider got in eleven rounds, the *Clan Mactavish* four or five. The *Clan Mactavish* was hit on the foredeck beside the windlass, then on the water-line. Her engines stopped. Then a shell entered the engine-room skylight, smashed the steering-engine, killed fifteen coloured firemen and wounded four, and filled the engine-room with scalding steam. The *Clan Mactavish* was done. She signalled, but apparently the Raider failed to read the lamp, for the Raider fired another round. Then the Raider ceased fire and signalled that she was sending a boat.

Presently two German officers with an armed crew of seven men came on board. One of the officers asked the master the characteristically German question why he fired, to which the master replied, to defend himself.

The German officers then lined up the Europeans on deck, and ordered the native comple-

ment into the boats. There stood the officers and men of the *Clan Mactavish,* amid the splinters and wreckage and blood, the steam still hissing into the dark from the engine-room, and contemplated their armed guard and the proceedings of their captors. The German officers told the people of the *Clan Mactavish* that if they moved they would be shot. So they stood still, while the Germans destroyed the gun, and sent the ship's carpenter to sound the well. At first there was no water, but a little after it was coming in, probably through the hole in the water-line.

The people of the *Clan Mactavish* were ordered into the boats, two of which were directed to go to the Raider and two to the *Appam.* The master and the two gunners went to the Raider, where they were treated as prisoners of war; a correct procedure, inasmuch as in resisting capture they became combatants.

The *Clan Mactavish* was sunk, probably by bombs. The explosion occurred about 8.30. She sank slowly. The third officer, half an hour later, saw the last of his ship. Her decks were awash, and the red ensign was flying.

In the meantime the British prisoners on board the Raider, huddled on the 'tween-deck, hearkened to the guns, not without emotion. It occurred to them that if the Raider's antagonist was a ship of war, they might expect the Raider to go down with them. In any case, at any moment a shell might burst on the 'tween-decks. But it was speedily evident that the

guns of the Raider were overpowering the other vessel.

And in due time the officers and men of the *Clan Mactavish* joined the party. The third engineer was slightly wounded.

Did the *Clan Mactavish* hit the Raider? Probably she did. The Germans were naturally reticent on the subject. But the Raider stopped at midnight for a time, and the coolies among the prisoners aboard, who had been set to work, told the chief officer of the *Clan Mactavish* that two Germans were then buried. Lieutenant Berg seems to have told an American newspaper that one German was killed and two were wounded.

Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, who was then in command of the Grand Fleet, when the first news of the fight came to him, telegraphed to the owners of the *Clan Mactavish:*

"The magnificent fight shown by the *Clan Mactavish* fills us in the Grand Fleet with admiration. We sympathise deeply with those who have lost relatives as a result of the action."

The master of the *Clan Mactavish* did not know how many guns the Raider mounted. What he did know was that he was heavily outmatched, and that he might also be attacked by the second ship. But at close range, even with his light gun, he may have reckoned that he had a sporting chance. But very likely he did not reckon at all, but simply resolved not to be taken without a fight. When he comes back from Germany, where he is a prisoner of war, he may tell us.

IV

The "Appam" as Prize

On the morning of the day following the sinking of the *Clan Mactavish,* Monday, January 17th, 1916, the Raider and the *Appam* were proceeding westwards at full speed. In the afternoon the prisoners on board the Raider, excepting the people of the *Clan Mactavish,* received orders to prepare to leave the ship. The masters of the *Corbridge, Farringford, Dromonby, Author, Trader, Appam* and *Ariadne* were summoned to the presence of the captain of the Raider, Count Dohna, who received them in the chart-room. That officer informed the captives of his bow and spear that they were to be transhipped to the *Appam.* Count Dohna then read to them the instructions he had given to Lieutenant Berg, in command of the *Appam.* These were to the effect that if the prisoners made the slightest attempt at riot or mutiny, the *Appam* would instantly be blown up; that if an enemy (Allied) cruiser attacked the *Appam* the prisoners, if time allowed, would be put into boats, when the ship would be destroyed; for, said the Count, she was in charge of men who would sacrifice their lives rather than she should be retaken. All being well, the Count added, the masters and crews would be taken to a safe port. Having made an end of his plain statement, Count Dohna shook hands all round and signified that the audience was over.

At four o'clock that afternoon the masters and men of the seven vessels were sent across

to the *Appam*. With them were a part of the crew of the *Clan Mactavish,* the passenger, "a Birmingham man," who had refused to sign the declaration of neutrality, and Sir Edward Merewether. The transhipment was finished by 6.30.

The prisoners on board the *Appam* were guarded by the German ex-prisoners. They were allowed the run of the ship below the boat-deck, and were classified as first, second and third-class passengers, and had "no complaints, but not too much to eat." It was no doubt the impossibility of feeding so large a number, and the inconvenience of keeping them on board a fighting ship, that decided the commander of the Raider to ship them off in the *Appam* to a neutral port. In so doing he acted with humanity, for he must have known that he was risking the internment of his prize when she touched America. With German forethought and precision the *Appam* was dispatched at the moment when the amount of rations left would just enable her to reach port. One of the masters reported that when they fetched up, there was very little left, but "no one looked any the worse for it."

The engineer on board the *Appam* was ordered to keep nine knots. If smoke was sighted, the *Appam* turned away from it to avoid pursuit and increased her speed. Her wireless operator was constantly at work. In case of emergency a bomb was placed in the engine-room in charge of two sentries.

For twenty-four hours the *Appam* kept in

company with the Raider, which then disappeared.

On February 1st, 1916, after a fortnight's voyage, the *Appam* arrived in Hampton Roads, U.S.A. On the following day the British masters were allowed to go on shore to see the British naval attaché. The next day, after various formalities, the Appam went to Newport News, where the British prisoners were set free. They parted from Lieutenant Berg on excellent terms. According to their testimony, the politeness of the Germans throughout was "most marked."

The released captives went to New York. It must have been a pleasant change.

On July 29th following, the Federal Court of Norfolk, Virginia, decided the case of the *Appam* in favour of the British owners, holding that the German Government lost all legal claim upon the *Appam* when she was brought into neutral waters with the intention of laying her up for an indefinite period.

V

Subsequent Glimpses of the Raider

After parting company with the *Appam,* the Raider steered for the mouth of the Amazon, where she arrived towards the end of January. On January 27th the *Corbridge,* which had been captured on the 11th and placed in charge of a prize crew, arrived according to instructions; and during the three following days the Raider was coaling from her. On January 30th the Raider sank the *Corbridge,* and so departed.

By February 9th the steamships *Horace* and *Flamenco,* the sailing ship *Edinburgh,* and the Belgian steamship *Luxembourg* were put down, and the steamship *Westburn* was captured and put in charge of a prize crew. On February 9th the chief officer and others of the people of the *Clan Mactavish* were sent on board the *Westburn* and were subsequently landed at Teneriffe.

The captain and the two naval gunners and the Lascars of the *Clan Mactavish* were kept on board the Raider.

On February 23rd, the Raider sank the *Westburn* in Spanish territorial waters.

On February 25th the Raider sank the *Saxon Prince.* Three days later the Raider was in the North Sea, her funnels transformed from grey to yellow with black tops, and the Swedish colours blazoned on either side the hull.

Early in March the Raider entered a German port.

According to the statement made by the First Lord of the Admiralty on March 28th, 1916, the toll of British ships captured or sunk by the Raider is as follows: *Farringford, Corbridge, Author, Dromonby, Trader, Clan Mactavish, Horace, Flamenco, Edinburgh, Saxon Prince, Westburn, Appam.* To these must be added the *Ariadne* and the Belgian steamship *Luxembourg.*

The English admire nothing so much as the success of an enemy.

XIV

A Gallant Warning

On a pleasant May morning in the year 1916 a company assembled in a room of the Royal Naval Reserve barracks of a South Coast port. Here were officers and men of the Royal Navy and of the mercantile marine, come to do honour to a merchant ship master. That officer had been as near to death as may be; not (you will say) an unusual circumstance; but he dared everything to save others. Therefore you may behold with the inward eye of retrospection a commander of the Royal Navy handing a gold watch to the embarrassed master, who is not accustomed to these ceremonies, and who finds a difficulty in discovering the right responses in the ritual.

The commander explains that, as the legend engraven on the watch testifies, it is presented to the master "by the London Group of War Risk Associations, with the approval of the Admiralty, in recognition of his efforts to save other ships from contact with German mines on February 12th, 1916."

And how did the master do it?

He was taking the little steamship *Cedarwood* down the East Coast, bound for France laden with pig-iron. There was half a gale of wind, and there was a choppy sea. It was about ten o'clock in the morning when the look-out seaman perceived a floating mine. Off the starboard bow the bright scarlet of the mine gleamed in and out the waves. Now where there is one mine there are probably others, especially if they are sown by an enemy submarine in the coastwise track of shipping; and there were some fifteen vessels steaming at various distances astern of the *Cedarwood.*

The master did not hesitate for an instant. He eased down, hoisted flags signifying "submarine mines are about," and made the same signal with steam whistle. Then he steamed in a circle about the mine, in order both to attract a patrol boat and to show to the ships following him where was the danger.

Thus the master swung the *Cedarwood* through the circle which was almost certain to intersect the line of mines, if other mines there were. And if there were, they would be moored out of sight at a depth beneath the surface nicely calculated to strike the hull of the *Cedarwood.* So small a vessel striking a mine would be blown to atoms.

Nevertheless the master continued to circumnavigate the scarlet floating mine for about a quarter of an hour.

"At about 10.20 a.m.," so runs the master's report, "I was on the bridge together with the mate, when I heard a terrible explosion, and the

fore end of the ship seemed to go up in the air, also some of the pig-iron cargo, at the same time where I was standing (the upper bridge) seemed to fall underneath me. I did not see the mate again, and was sucked down with the ship, and I have a recollection of getting hold of the flagstaff on the stern, therefore I must have been carried right aft with the force of the water."

This simple statement is singularly illuminating. The tremendous shock and paralysing instancy of the explosion inhibit verification by the senses of what is happening. Therefore the master says the fore end of the ship "seemed" to go up in the air, and the bridge "seemed" to fall under him. As a matter of fact both these things did happen, and they happened simultaneously. The master partially lost consciousness, for he did not remember being swept aft, buried in water. He thinks he must have been so swept, because he recalls clutching the flagstaff astern. It would seem, therefore, that an explosion partially or wholly paralyses consciousness, and most often effects an instant annihilation.

The master was drawn down with the fragments of the ship, smashed machinery and masses of pig-iron. He struggled to the surface, saw a hatch floating, swam to it, and clung to it. Then, over the breaking sea, he perceived the stern of a steamer, and a white boat surging towards him. He saw the men in the boat haul first one man and then another from the water, and then he was helped on board. On the way back the boat picked up another seaman who was floating on a piece of wreckage, and the

four soaked, dazed and shivering men were brought on board the steamer, where "they were all very kindly treated." In the meantime two more men were rescued by another steamer. Both these vessels, with the rest sailing on that route, had been saved by the sacrifice of the *Cedarwood*. Six men, including the master, were rescued; six were drowned.

The next day, Sunday, early in the morning, there rose upon the master's grateful vision the grey spire of Gravesend Church, known to seamen all the world over as the half-way mark between the Nore and Port of London; and the hill of huddled red-roofed houses, and the watermen coming alongside in their black wherries.

Presently the master landed beside the old taverns leaning upon one another along the river-wall, and trod once more the grey stones of the deserted streets, sunk in Sunday quiet.

XV

The Fight of the "Goldmouth"

The wireless operator lay in hospital, because his foot had been blown off, and beside his bed, writing down his statements, sat a naval officer. "The last message received was in code, which I took to the captain on the bridge to be decoded, but this was not done owing to the fact that the captain had thrown overboard the code-book, the vessel being then in imminent danger of capture."

Such, in fact, was the situation on board the *Goldmouth* on the afternoon of March 31st, 1916. She was homeward bound, carrying oil, and was within some hours of the Channel, steaming about ten knots. At about twenty minutes to one the master descried the conning tower of a submarine rising out of the water some three miles away on the starboard beam, and approaching the *Goldmouth*. Ten minutes afterwards the submarine opened fire.

Then began a running fight waged furiously for more than an hour. The submarine, mounting two guns, fired about ten rounds a minute, at a range longer than the range of the single small gun carried by the *Goldmouth*.

The master hoisted his colours half-mast, and gave the order to open fire. Thereafter the two gunners of the *Goldmouth* served their little gun as best they might, under the continuous fire of the submarine. A shell smashed half the bridge of the *Goldmouth,* another pierced the deck and exploded in an oil tank, the officers' cabins were wrecked, the hull was pierced in several places, and the oil oozed through the holes and spread upon the sea. Soon after the fight began, the main steam pipe was damaged and the speed of the *Goldmouth* dropped to three or four knots.

So the stricken vessel, firing about once a minute, crawled through the spreading surface of oil, splinters flying, shot after shot striking her. The master remained on the bridge. The wireless operator, true to his service, continued to send out calls for help. He worked under great disabilities. Amid the incessant firing, it was almost impossible to hear the answers he received. But answers were sent from a distant patrol vessel. She was too far away to arrive in time to help the *Goldmouth,* but she seems to have signalled in plain language the course the *Goldmouth* was to steer. The code messages could not be accurately decoded because the master had thrown overboard his confidential papers.

Towards the end of the affair the wireless operator had his foot blown off. It is extraordinary that the only other casualty was the loss of a finger suffered by a Chinaman.

By a little after two o'clock the gunners of the *Goldmouth* had expended the whole of their

ammunition. Outranged and out-gunned, they had not scored a single hit. The *Goldmouth* was totally disabled. Having done all that it was possible to do, the master decided to abandon his ship.

The chief officer stated in evidence that he considered "the master complied with Admiralty instructions and took all possible steps to avoid being captured or sunk. The ship's speed was greatly reduced owing to steam-pipe being hit by shells, and she was outdistanced by the submarine. The ship was hopelessly outclassed in guns, and only stopped firing when all ammunition had been expended and ship disabled."

Such is the official testimony, officially phrased. The master's evidence is not available, for a reason which will appear.

He ordered the crew into boats. There were only two left, a lifeboat and a smaller boat. Three lifeboats and a smaller boat had been smashed by shells. By this time the submarine was close to the *Goldmouth.* The German officer ordered the boats to come alongside the submarine. The master was haled on board, where the Germans greeted him with curses and threatenings. Many Germans believe that any resistance to their sovereign will is a kind of blasphemy. The commander of the submarine took the master prisoner, and a prisoner he remains.

The Germans, upon being asked to give first-aid dressings to the wounded wireless operator and the Chinaman, refused.

The German officer ordered the boats away,

and again opened fire on the *Goldmouth.* He fired sixty rounds, and discharged two torpedoes at close range, and so sank the ship. Then he went away.

The two boats pulled for three hours, when they were rescued by a trawler.

The crew of the *Goldmouth* consisted of twelve British and forty-seven Chinamen. "All behaved well, especially the British."

XVI

The Worth of a Life

Serene moonlight, and a big cargo-boat rolling eastwards midmost of the Mediterranean, the watch on deck savouring the breath of the cool night. It was midnight of July 15th-16th, 1916. Save for the murmur of the engines, there was silence, and the darkened and flashing field of water was empty. Then, low down on the surface, there shone a tongue of fire; there came the detonation of a gun, sudden and startling, and a shell whined in the air somewhere near the *Virginia*. The master, who was below in his cabin, ran up to the bridge.

As the master came up he found the firemen rushing up from the stokehold, and ordered them below again.

At first the master could see nothing; and, not knowing whence or by whom the shot was fired, he stopped the engines. Then he descried the conning-tower of a submarine five or six hundred yards astern and overhauling him. The master instantly ordered full speed ahead and steered to keep the enemy astern.

The submarine fired, and continued to fire.

Then began a chase in which the submarine, with her high speed and small turning circle, easily countered the manœuvres of the hunted ship, keeping steadily on her port quarter. The firemen stuck to their work, but nine and a half knots was the best the ship could do. Now and again she was hit. The *Virginia* was unarmed. The master ordered the wireless operator to send the distress call, S.O.S., and he received from some unknown ship the reply "Coming." But no ship came. The master, in case of emergencies, destroyed his confidential papers, and held on. Whether or not some of the crew were wounded during the chase is uncertain.

After half an hour a shell smashed the funnel, filling the engine-room with soot and ashes, whereupon the engineers and firemen came on deck, and the master decided that the game was up. He stopped the ship and ordered the men into the boats. The submarine continued to fire.

There was the stricken ship, rolling in a cloud of smoke and steam, the boats rising and falling alongside, the men scrambling down the lifelines, and, beyond, the submarine leisurely firing. The shells struck the ship and the splinters flew among the hurrying men. Ten of them were wounded.

Twenty-five men got away in three boats and rowed clear of the ship. The fourth boat had been hit and was lying alongside full of water. The master, the chief officer and twenty-three others were left on board to get away as best they might. The chief engineer, the wireless operator and the chief steward, the carpenter

and a seaman stayed by the master and chief officer and helped them to get the men into the water-logged boat. They were all embarked, as, in the stress and tumult, they believed, except the master and the chief officer, when the master discovered a wounded man of the native crew. The chief officer stayed to help the master lift the helpless man and lower him into the boat.

At the same time they perceived the white track of a torpedo swiftly lengthening towards the ship, saw it strike the hull, glance off, and turn back. At about sixty yards' distance it exploded, flinging up a column of water.

The master and the chief officer had lowered the wounded man into the boat, when they saw the track of another torpedo. They were still on board when the torpedo struck the *Virginia* full under the main rigging, port side, below the water-line, tearing her to pieces. Instantly she settled down, and the master and the chief officer were drawn down with her. But she did not sink at once. The master, struggling to the surface, laid hold on her bows, and drew breath. Then down she went, and down with her again went the master. He came up again and was hauled into the water-logged boat.

The chief officer was never seen again. He lost his life because he remained with the master to help him to save the wounded man.

Exactly what happened to the water-logged and crowded boat lying alongside when the ship went down is not clear. She was drawn down with the ship, but she seems to have kept right side up. In any case, she remained afloat, and

an hour and a half afterwards she was picked up by a French patrol boat.

Whether or not the submarine dived after firing the second torpedo and departing, the master was unable to state, because, as he says, he "was under the water at the time."

While these things were happening in the *Virginia* two of the other three boats were standing off, and the third officer in the other boat was ordered by the commander of the submarine to come alongside. The submarine captain asked the third officer for information concerning the ship, and then inquired if there were still people on board her. He then ordered the third officer to bring to him the master and the ship's papers, giving him thirty minutes to go and come.

About four minutes after the third officer had left the submarine her commander fired the first torpedo. By that time the French patrol boat was in sight; and it may be supposed that the submarine officer, seeing the enemy, abandoned his intention of saving the captain and the rest of the crew, and decided swiftly to end the business. As he did.

The submarine officers wore blue tunics with high collars, and their caps differed from the German pattern. The men wore jerseys open at the neck. The submarine was new painted grey above her water-line when running awash, and black below. She mounted one gun forward of the conning-tower. Presumably she was Austrian.

All the boats of the *Virginia* were picked up

by the French patrol boat. One of the wounded men died on board her, and was buried at sea. The rescued men "received great kindness" from their French hosts in the patrol vessel.

In the following September the master was awarded by the Board of Trade a silver medal for having remained on board the sinking vessel in order to rescue a wounded native seaman.

XVII

The Engineers of the "Yser"

On the night of July 19th, 1915, the little cargo-boat *Yser,* on the way from Cette to Gibraltar in ballast, passed a vessel which the captain took to be a merchant vessel, and thought no more about her. At seven o'clock next morning the master saw the conning-tower of a submarine start out of the haze about a mile and a half away on the port bow. Almost at the same moment came the flash and report of her gun.

The master ordered full steam and fled. The submarine, rapidly overhauling him, fired shot after shot, at intervals of two or three minutes. One projectile flew so close to the master that he was blown backwards with the wind of its passing. Fragments of shell hurtled down upon the bridge and deck.

During the attack, the steamship which had been passed by the *Yser* in the night was four or five miles distant, beyond the submarine and astern of the *Yser,* holding a parallel course. The submarine thought it worth while to fire a shot at her.

When the submarine was within about half a mile the master of the *Yser,* considering that the enemy could fire into the ship when he chose, disabling her and killing the crew, decided to abandon ship. So he stopped engines and ordered the boats to be swung out. No sooner had he stopped than the submarine unaccountably submerged. Without staying to reflect upon what was the reason for the enemy's manœuvre, the master instantly seized the chance to escape, and started slow ahead.

At first it seemed as though the enemy had really gone, and hope gleamed upon the people of the *Yser.* The chief engineer below, after the sudden cessation of the stress of keeping up full steam and working the engines under fire, had brought his men to it again, and they were again doing their utmost. Until now they had endured that suspense which is the portion of men below during an attack; unable to see what was happening on deck, hearing the incessant reports of gunfire, and momently expecting a shell to burst among them. Now, having brought the ship through during a hot twenty minutes, having been told that their job was done, and having settled to abandon ship, they must begin all over again. And at the orders of the chief engineer they did it. Here is a silent and homely exploit which deserves remembrance, and which makes notable the affair of the *Yser.*

But presently the master descried the menacing periscope cleaving the surface about a quarter of a mile away on the starboard side. The submarine had gained a quarter of a mile

in a few minutes. Then the master perceived the track of an approaching torpedo.

It was now a question of seconds. The master stopped engines and ordered all hands into the boats. The whole of the crew, twenty-five men, got away, and the seven officers were in the act to follow them into the boats when the torpedo struck. The chief officer, descending the life-line, was flung into the sea and sank, dead. The torpedo blew an immense hole right through the ship from side to side.

The boats pulled away as the ship settled down, and five minutes afterwards she was gone. It was then about half-past seven.

In the meantime the strange vessel which, during the attack, was steaming four or five miles away from the *Yser,* and gradually closing her, had disappeared. When the men in the boats had been cruising about for some hours she returned, picked them up and brought them into port.

From first to last the enemy submarine made no signal and hoisted no colours.

XVIII

Slipping Between

The case of the *Roddam* may be cited as an example among thousands of examples of the vigilance of the Admiralty. It is no fault of the Navy that it is unable to give an absolute protection to mariners; they are now obliged to fight in their own defence as best they may; and during the continuance of the war it is impossible to record by what means or in what degree the Navy has defended and saved merchant shipping from mine, submarine and cruiser. It must be enough for the present to know that in default of the Navy the losses inflicted by the enemy on the merchant service would be indefinitely multiplied. One might even say that in default of the Navy, ere three years of war were done, there would have been no merchant service.

The Trade division of the Admiralty has an eye like the Mormon eye. It is omnipresent. It beholds every officer and man, every ship, boat, cargo and gun of the mercantile marine. All that can be done to avert catastrophe is done; in the event of catastrophe, all is saved that

can be saved, and brought home from the ends of the earth.

On September 26th, 1916, the cargo-boat *Roddam* was going home across the north-west Mediterranean, in the area lying between the Balearic Islands and the Spanish coast. In the morning a French torpedo-boat destroyer slid into signalling range and told the master of the *Roddam* that a submarine had been sighted some hours earlier, in such-and-such a position, steering a course which would bring her towards the *Roddam.* The master altered course accordingly.

At half-past two another French destroyer signalled that a submarine had been sighted, and gave the master of the *Roddam* his course.

The master obeyed instructions, ordered his two gunners to stand by their gun, kept a strict look-out, and in this state of suspense held on for two hours, in fine clear weather, a fresh breeze and a tumbling, following sea.

Suddenly came the report of a distant gun, and a shell came over from astern, pitching into the water a ship's length ahead. The master ran the red ensign to the main, and ordered the gunners to open fire. It was a futile exercise, for the submarine, almost invisible six or seven miles astern, had the range of the *Roddam,* whose shot fell hopelessly short of the enemy.

A shell entered the chart-room and passed out through the wheel-house; another pierced the deck of the bridge; others went through the after-deck.

The master asked the two Royal Marine gunners what they thought about it. They

thought it was perfectly useless to try to hit an enemy who was out of reach, and who could shell the *Roddam* at leisure.

The master hauled down his flag, stopped engines, and ordered the boats away. The action had lasted about a quarter of an hour. Within the next fifteen minutes both boats were away. There were eleven people in the port boat, under the command of the chief officer, and seventeen people in the starboard boat, under the command of the master. Both boats sailed to windward. There was a nasty sea, the wind veering and gusty, and the two boats were soon separated by some distance. The chief officer, after cruising for half an hour, perceived the submarine approaching. Coming alongside the master's boat, she stopped, and lay still for about half an hour. The dusk was gathering, and the chief officer was too far away to see details.

He perceived the submarine to draw near the *Roddam* and to fire into her fore and aft, until she listed over to starboard and began to settle by the stern. Then the submarine came towards the chief officer, who went about to meet her, but she kept on, and so disappeared into the dark. By this time both the *Roddam* and the master's boat were invisible. The chief officer handled his boat so that she might live through the gale, suiting his course to the weather.

In the meantime, when the submarine was approaching the master's boat, flying a small Austrian ensign on her periscope, the submarine officer ordered the master's boat alongside, and standing on the conning-tower clad in oilskins,

revolver in hand, shouted, "Where's the captain?" The master's boat, on coming alongside the submarine in a lop of sea, stove in several strakes upon the submarine's handrail. Five or six Austrian seamen, dressed in brown overalls, were on the deck of the submarine.

The Austrian officer ordered the master to come on board, and asked the usual question: "Why did you fire?" He demanded the ship's papers, and the master gave him a wallet, which contained some old and valueless account sheets. His confidential papers had been thrown overboard in a weighted bag.

The submarine officer said, "I suppose you know you are a prisoner of war?" and pointed to the hatch. The master, who seems to have held his peace during the interrogation, silently disappeared through the hatch and was no more seen. (Fortunately the two gunners were in the other boat, and so escaped capture.)

The command of the starboard boat then devolved upon the second officer. The captain of the submarine seems to have left the subsequent conduct of the affair to the lieutenant, who was courteous enough. As the starboard boat of the *Roddam* was damaged, he allowed the second officer to return to his ship to get another.

"I give you a good chance to go on board," said he, and towed the starboard boat back to the *Roddam*. The lieutenant stipulated that no one was to go on the gun platform, told the second officer he was to steer north-north-west, and stood clear.

The second officer, who had been slightly

wounded during the attack, climbed on board the forlorn and broken ship. Hurried and shaken as he was, he searched among the wreckage for the ship's papers in case they had not been destroyed, but it was impossible to find anything among the ruins.

Then he got away the motor-boat and put eight persons into her, the other eight remaining in the damaged starboard boat, and laid his course for the mainland, which was some thirty-five miles distant.

As the two boats receded the darkness astern was cloven by the flashes of the guns of the submarine as she fired into the deserted ship.

All three boats were now adrift in a gale, the chief officer's boat being separated from the other two. For the time being the eye of the Admiralty lost sight of them. But not for long. About one o'clock in the morning the chief officer, struggling to keep the boat alive in a heavy sea and with a shifting wind, burned red flares to call the other boats. The second officer answered with red flares; but in that weather the chief officer could not reach the other boats, and did not, in fact, see them again.

At daylight he made sail and steered for the mainland. After sailing for three or four hours he sighted a steamer, and steered for her, making signals of distress. At about half-past nine the boat was picked up by a neutral vessel, which landed the chief officer's party at Valencia. So much for one boat.

The second officer's party, at daylight, were within fifteen or twenty miles of land, which

was visible. Their progress towards it in that weather was very slow; and at noon they were picked up by a French man-of-war, which landed them at Marseilles.

On the following day the Admiralty knew that the chief officer's party had been landed at Valencia, that the master was a prisoner, and that the second officer's party had been picked up by the French man-of-war aforesaid. But where the second officer's party had been landed the Admiralty, owing to some telegraphic confusion, did not then know. Immediately a number of persons in various parts of the world understood that the Admiralty wanted to know and intended to find out. Nor was it long before the Admiralty had accounted for every man of the *Roddam,* not to mention her boats. And eventually there came to the Admiralty information that the captive master was alive and well.

The master, like many another British master, knew that in fighting his ship, as in duty bound, with the weapons provided, he had but the slightest chance of defeating the enemy, and he also knew that if his ship was taken he would be made a prisoner of war. A ship too slow to escape, a target too small to hit, and prison in front of him; such at that time was the predicament of the mercantile marine master. He tried to escape, and was overhauled; he fought, and was outmatched; and so to prison.

The *Roddam* slipped between the protection of the French patrol and luck.

XIX

Heavy Weather

The submarine prefers to attack in fine weather. It is pleasanter for all parties concerned, and much easier. The reports usually record weather fine and clear, light airs, slight swell. But the *Cabotia* was attacked and chased in a North Atlantic autumn gale.

She left the United States on October 9th, 1916, carrying some 5,000 tons of cargo, consisting of wood pulp and 300 horses, and steamed at once into a gale. It blew hard, with a heavy sea, almost without cessation, and after eleven days was worse. On the 20th a full gale was blowing from the south-west. The *Cabotia,* steaming east, was holding a zig-zag course at ten knots, pitching and rolling, the sea continually washing over the decks. The master, the chief officer, and the second officer were in the chart-house, working out the position of the ship taken by observation at noon. They made out that she was 120 miles from the nearest land, or twelve hours' steaming. These were the dangerous hours. If nothing happened during the day, by midnight the ship would be safe.

The third officer was on watch on the bridge, where an able seaman was at the wheel. An able seaman was looking out on the forecastle head, scanning the broken hills of water rising and falling away to the grey horizon.

Suddenly, across the smother, the look-out saw a dark and glistening object emerge. It was about three miles away on the starboard bow. The officers left the chart-house; the master went on the bridge; and all deck hands were summoned on deck. The master put the ship right about, bringing the submarine astern. The submarine fired, and continued to fire at intervals of about five minutes, while she manœuvred to get on the *Cabotia's* quarter. But the master of the *Cabotia* kept a zig-zag course, and manœuvred quicker than the submarine, so that the chief officer presently said he thought the *Cabotia* could escape. She was unarmed.

The movement of the ship, turning swiftly to port and starboard alternately in a beam sea, was very violent. The sufferings of the horses penned below are not described, but they may be imagined. The engineers and firemen, as usual, stuck to their work and kept the ship at her full speed of ten knots. It is uncertain whether or not the ship was hit during a chase which thus furiously proceeded for an hour and a half. But the officers of the *Cabotia* clustered on the oscillating bridge were staring aft at the shape astern. It was now buried in flying water, the gunner at his gun plunged up to his neck in the sea, now emerging and firing with a

sullen flash and a detonation torn by the wind; and the people in the *Cabotia* perceived that in spite of her difficult manœuvring, the submarine had three knots the better in speed, and was overhauling them.

The master ordered the boats to be swung out, and dropped his confidential papers overboard. No one thought the boats could live in the sea then running; but they were the only chance. The wireless operator had been constantly making the distress call, and a little before two o'clock he received an answer.

But by that time the submarine was close under the stern of the *Cabotia,* and she put a shell through the *Cabotia's* funnel. Then the master stopped engines, hoisted the signal that he was abandoning ship, and ordered the crew into the boats.

Here was another test of discipline and seamanship, to get the boats away from the rolling vessel, in that frightful sea, under the continual fire of the submarine. Among the seventy-four men of the crew, besides British, were Greeks, Italians, Portuguese, Americans, Danes and Norwegians; and all "behaved splendidly."

There were four boats, each having a week's provisions on board, and all were safely launched. The boats were in charge of the master, chief, second and third officers respectively. In that sea it was all they could do to keep their boats afloat, and they were immediately separated each from the other.

The second officer, who with his men expected every instant to be drowned, kept his boat

before the sea, the men pulling to keep steerage way on her, and so waited for orders from the master. He saw the submarine go alongside the third officer's boat, and speak to the third officer. Then the submarine went close to the *Cabotia* and fired twelve shots into her. The *Cabotia* settled slowly down, and about half an hour afterwards she was gone.

About the same time the second officer sighted a steamer. He hoisted a shirt on the mast, and pulled hard towards her. The steamer stopped, but made no reply to the signal of distress; and the second officer, tossing desperately within a few hundred yards, saw the submarine go alongside the strange vessel. She carried neutral colours printed on her side, and a black funnel with a deep white band.

Without taking the slightest notice of the boats, the steamer got under way, saluted the submarine with a blast on her whistle, and departed. No explanation of these circumstances is available. That was what happened.

The second officer, abandoned to his fate, kept the boat before the sea, and looked for the other boats, but he could not see them. It was then about three o'clock in the afternoon. Four terrible hours later heavy rain began to fall, and the sea moderated a little. The second officer then steered for the land, about 120 miles distant, the men pulling steadily all night. When the ragged daylight dawned on the desolate sea, the second officer set sail, and made good way in comparative ease. At nine o'clock that morning the second officer sighted a patrol

boat right ahead. A few minutes later the second officer and his sturdy crew were safe on board the patrol boat, and the drenched, cold and exhausted men were sitting down to a hot breakfast.

In the meantime the chief officer's boat had gone through much the same ordeal. When the second officer pulled towards the strange steamer the chief officer was astern of him and further away from the vessel. The chief officer also made signals of distress, hoisting an apron. Like the second officer, he saw the steamer stop, noted her neutral colours and the white band on her funnel, saw the submarine draw alongside and converse with her, saw her depart.

At that time the master's boat and the third officer's boat were within sight of the other two, and all remained in company, though widely separated, drifting northwards stern to sea until dark.

When daylight came the chief officer's boat was alone. The chief officer hoisted sail, and laid his course for the land.

The second officer, on coming on board the patrol boat, of course reported the situation to her captain, who immediately steamed in search of the other three boats. Within twenty minutes the chief officer's boat was sighted, a little and solitary sail cleaving the wandering waters; and presently he and his party were safe on board the patrol.

All that day, all the night and all the following day the patrol vessel cruised in search of the master's and the third officer's boats. They

were not found. The second officer still held to a hope that they had been driven far to the north and would be rescued or make a landfall. But they were never seen again.

Thirty-two officers and men went down on that night of storm; thirty-two out of seventy-four. In such a sea a small boat with little steerage way might be pooped at any moment; that is, being continually followed and overhung by huge seas, she might fail to rise to the next sea in time, when the following wave would fall upon her, sending her to the bottom like a stone.

Of this hazard the commanding officer of the German submarine was perfectly aware, when he forced the master of the *Cabotia* to abandon ship, with the alternative of being torpedoed and himself and the ship's company drowned. It is also evident that the submarine officer prevented the steamer which came along from rescuing the men in the boats. Either that steamer was a German disguised as a neutral, or she was a neutral. If she was a neutral ship (which seems probable) the submarine officer must have told her master that if she picked up the boats she would herself be destroyed. If the ship was a German vessel, the case is no better. The thirty-two men were murdered.

The example of the *Cabotia* showed that a submarine can attack in weather so heavy that a small patrol boat could hardly live in it, and even if she came through, her speed would be considerably decreased.

Neither of the two officers of the *Cabotia* whose evidence is recorded made any mention

of the events of that night, during which their boats drifted before the wind and sea of a North Atlantic gale in autumn. Yet during all those dark hours the men, beaten upon by the driving rain, soaked with spray, went on rowing and rowing; while the steersman, feeling the boat leap and sway under his hand, knew that the slightest failure in vigilance was certain death.

XX

A Sitting Shot

The ship was anchored for the night, and the chief engineer, having pumped up his boilers, closed all connections and made sure that everything was correct, as a careful man should, went up to the deck-house for a little chat before turning in. Here was the master, who, having seen that the anchor lights were burning, the watch was set and all was snug, also felt disposed for social relaxation.

That day, February 1st, 1916, the master and the engineer had brought the *Franz Fischer,* a little ex-German collier (now officially described as the property of the Lord High Admiral) down the east coast, amid various alarms and through a thick haze. Finally, the master received a warning from a patrol boat that there were floating mines ahead. It was then about nine o'clock of a windless night, and "black dark," and the master had decided to anchor where he was, off the south-east coast.

The two men, at this pause in their toils, talked of mines and submarines and enemy cruisers and the anxiety of navigating unlighted

waters, and how they were safe where they lay, for a night at least. But they had forgotten one thing.

While the master and the chief engineer were thus peacefully engaged, the boatswain was on the bridge, in charge of the watch, with an able seaman.

Presently the boatswain remarked that he "heard a noise like an aeroplane." The observation interested the able seaman because, as he said, he had "never previously heard an aeroplane," and he listened to the strange tin-like humming, gazing up into the opaque darkness. The mate, who was in his cabin adjoining the master's room in the deck-house, came upon the bridge. The mate's opinion was that the noise came, not from an aeroplane, but from a Zeppelin. The invisible thing in the air seemed to be circling about the ship.

The two men in the master's cabin, hearing a faint, whirring sound, paused in their conversation to listen to it. At the same moment there came a knocking on the bulkhead, and the mate's voice asking the master if he heard aircraft.

"Yes—what is it?" said the master. The mate replied that he did not know, but that, whatever it was, it was approaching from the south-east. As they hearkened the humming died away, and for a minute or two there was silence.

Suddenly the vibrating roar of aerial engines burst upon the ship so close above her that "the sound was like several express railway trains all crossing a bridge together, and at its loudest

it would not be possible to hear a man shout." So said the able seaman, who was on deck. What the boatswain thought will never be known, because he did not live to tell.

Then the clangour stopped once more; again there was a brief and terrifying silence; and then a tremendous explosion in the ship, which shivered all over, steadied, and began to heel over to port.

The master and the chief engineer, coming out from the deck-house into the alleyway, were met by a falling column of water and were flung backwards into the cabin, while the able seaman was dashed against the door of the galley and partially stunned.

The chief engineer, struggling to his feet, ran out on the listing deck to summon the men from below, and came to the engine-room companion just as the second mate, second engineer, steward, donkey-man and mess-room boy came crowding up, all naked as they had tumbled out of their berths. The chief engineer missed a fireman, but he had no time to look for him. The ship was heeling over rapidly. The chief engineer ran to the starboard lifeboat, which was swung out, and in which was a seaman.

At the same time the able seaman, coming to his senses, sprang for the boats, which were surrounded by the dim figures of naked men, and which, as the ship leaned over, were jammed in the falls. As usual, no one had a knife. A man ran to the galley to fetch a knife. The ship turned over, everyone on board was drawn down with her, and, said the chief engineer, she

"appeared as if she sank just like a stone."

The chief engineer, coming to the surface, scanned the dark waters, caught sight of a floating object, swam to it, and held on to the box containing lifebelts, which had been washed from the bridge of the ship. All about the chief engineer cries for help went up from the men in the water. Several swimmers gained the box and clung to it. In the icy water, the darkness and confusion, the chief engineer thought that about eight men were clustered about the box, and he remembers recognising the second mate and the donkey-man. The men tried to climb upon the box and capsized it. With much desperate swearing, it was righted again, but some of the men, paralysed by the cold of the water, had gone down. Those who remained continued struggling to climb upon the box, and to capsize it, and more men dropped off and were drowned.

The chief engineer, considering that he would be safer by himself, let go the box and struck out. He found a lifebelt floating, put it on, and swam and floated until he lost consciousness. The next thing he knew he was lying in the bottom of a boat, rescued.

Still clinging to the box were the able seaman, who was on watch when the ship was attacked, and the donkey-man. The able seaman heard the clank and splash of oars and saw a boat approaching, when the donkey-man relaxed his grasp and sank, and the able seaman could not save him.

The boat came from the Belgian steamship *Paul,* which had been anchored within half a

mile. It would have arrived sooner but for accidents. According to the captain's statement (published in *The Times*), after the explosion he heard cries of distress, and got away his lifeboat, manned by the mate, the boatswain, an able seaman and a fireman. In the thick darkness it was at first impossible to ascertain whence they came. Presently the shouts of three men were distinguishable, and the boat went away, and picked up first the able seaman, who was hanging on to the box, then the steward, who was floating in a lifebelt, then the chief engineer, who was to all appearance dead.

Then the boat was carried out to sea on the strong ebb. The master of the *Paul* waited and listened for her, and presently descried a signal, which he rightly interpreted to mean that she could not make head against the tide. The master must therefore go to the boat's assistance. Steam was raised, and the windlass manned to heave on the anchor. Then the windlass broke. Upon the details of that troubled time the master is silent; but it took three hours' hard work to reach the boat, with the ship's anchor dragging astern.

By that time one of the rescued men was so far gone from this life that when he was lifted aboard the *Paul* restoratives were applied for an hour before he revived.

Thirteen men out of sixteen were lost.

But their murderers, the crew of Zeppelin L19, also tasted salt water. The next morning a trawler beheld the ghastly tattered ruin of an airship sagging in the winter sea.

XXI

Shipmates with a Pirate

Morning of November 1st, 1916. A steamship rolling in the long swell of the North Atlantic, pursued by shots fired from astern by an invisible enemy. The *Seatonia* slipped this way and that like a hunted animal, the master scanning the hills of water rising and falling, until he saw the submarine. She was then some seven miles distant. Smoke, shot with flame, continually burst from her guns, and shells sang about the *Seatonia,* falling nearer and nearer. So, for nearly three hours. Then the submarine, running close on the steamer's beam, signalled "Abandon ship."

The master stopped engines and ordered the two boats away. Fourteen people went in the port lifeboat, seventeen in the starboard lifeboat, including the master, who was the last to leave the ship.

The port lifeboat was in charge of the chief officer and was first away. The submarine then hoisted the German ensign, and two small flags; and as the master's boat was launched, the submarine officer ordered her to come alongside.

The chief officer, standing off, saw the master and the rest of the people in the starboard lifeboat taken on board the submarine, and the lifeboat cast adrift. Whereupon the chief officer got under way, steered east by north, and (to make an end of his adventures) was picked up two or three hours afterwards by a neutral steamer, and subsequently landed in a neutral port, whence, with the thirteen men under his command, he came home in due time.

The master and the sixteen others of the crew of the starboard lifeboat were sent below in the submarine, so that the master did not see his ship sink; but he heard the "cough" of the discharge of the two torpedoes which sank her. The chief engineer of the *Seatonia,* who was also below, says he saw the torpedoes fired. The submarine then submerged, and the English and the other nationalities of the *Seatonia's* people were alone with the Germans in that narrow cylinder, intricate and glittering with pipes, wheels, valves and every kind of mechanism.

The commanding officer of the submarine was of sallow complexion and sharp of feature, looking about forty years of age. The first lieutenant was about thirty, a fair man of middle size. The second lieutenant, a dark, clean-shaven young officer, had (he said) lived for some years in Nova Scotia, and spoke good English.

The crew numbered forty-six. They wore thick felt-lined brown coats and trousers, made of rubber or waterproofed leather. The internal

fittings of the vessel were stamped V 49. Externally she carried no number, and was painted the usual grey.

The master says no word, bad or good, of his experience on board the enemy submarine. It is certain that he must have suffered a good deal of discomfort, for there is no accommodation for passengers in a submarine, and little enough for the crew. The commanding officer and first lieutenant may have had fitted bed-places; the other officer and the men slept on the floor. On that night of November 1st the people of the *Seatonia* must have been packed like herrings, and the air must have become very dense. It seems that they were hospitably treated. The commanding officer asked many questions of the master, who, if he were like other masters, did not illuminatingly respond. The lieutenant who had dwelt in Nova Scotia appears to have been socially disposed.

At eight o'clock the next morning, November 2nd, the submarine captain invited the master to come up on deck. There, in the keen air and sudden daylight, the master beheld three British steam trawlers tossing on a heavy run of sea. These were the *Caswell, Kyoto,* and *Harfat Castle.* But the master had not been asked on deck to admire the view. The submarine officer had already made his arrangements, and the master was part of them. The men of the *Caswell* were ordered to bring their boat alongside, and the submarine officer ordered the master to visit each of the three trawlers, to estimate the amount of coal in her bunkers, and

to open the sea-cocks, in the two which had least coal, and so to sink them. Such, at least, was what the master understood he was to do.

The master had no choice but to obey. So he went away in the *Caswell's* boat. The crews of the other two trawlers were getting away in their boats. No sooner was the crew of the *Kyoto* clear of her than the master was startled by the report of a gun, and saw a shell strike the *Kyoto.* The submarine fired into her till she sank. Apparently the German officer decided to hasten the good work.

Then the master perceived another steam trawler coming up. She looked like an Icelandic boat, was named *Bragi,* and was flying Danish colours. He afterwards discovered that the Dane had been captured by the submarine four days previously, and was then under the command of a German lieutenant, with an armed guard of three men. The *Bragi* was acting as consort to the submarine. She lay-to, and the submarine officer set the crews of all three trawlers and some of the *Seatonia's* crew to shifting coal from the two remaining British trawlers, *Caswell* and *Harfat Castle,* to the *Bragi.*

There was a considerable sea running, and the forced working party must hoist the coal from the bunkers, lower it into the boats, pull the boats across to the *Bragi,* hoist the coal on board her, return and do it all over again—a hard and heavy job. The Germans looked on.

The master makes no remark upon this procedure. The work went on for about six

hours, and was finished at half-past four in the afternoon. Then the black, wet and weary men were ordered on board the *Bragi,* which thus received the crew of the *Seatonia* and the crews of the three trawlers. The master of the *Seatonia* was kept on board the submarine.

The submarine officer ordered the master of the *Bragi* to come on board, gave him his instructions, and sent him back to his ship. The trawlers' boats were hoisted on board the *Bragi,* and the two remaining trawlers, now gutted of coal and supplies, were sunk by gunfire. The *Bragi* got under way and departed.

The master of the *Seatonia* was left alone with his German captors in the submarine.

The master was allowed on deck when there was no ship in sight, and he admired the seaworthy qualities of the submarine. She was much on the surface, both by day and night; during the whole time the master was on board it was blowing hard with a heavy sea; and he considered that the submarine "worked on the surface in a most weatherly way."

When a vessel which might have been an enemy was sighted the submarine dived, somewhat, it must be supposed, to the master's relief; for if she was put down he would infallibly go down with her, and it would have been a pity to be drowned by one's own people.

Twice during the night of November 3rd, the master's third night on board, firing went on over his head on deck. Two ships were attacked, and so far as the master could discover, unsuccessfully. In preparing to attack,

the submarine always submerged so soon as the ship was sighted, then rose again to fire at her.

The next night, the 4th, another vessel was attacked. Nothing more seems to have happened till the night of the 7th, when the master understood that the submarine was firing on the U.S.A. steamship *Columbian.*

Next day, November 8th, the submarine forced a Norwegian steamer, the *Balto,* to stop and wait for orders. Then the submarine once more attacked the *Columbian,* compelled the crew to abandon her, sent them on board the Norwegian, and then torpedoed the *Columbian.*

That was an interesting day for the British master. In her, but not of her, he watched a first-class pirate at work. The next day, the 9th, was also variously destructive. The submarine stopped a Swedish steamer, the *Varing,* and to her transferred the crews of the sunk *Columbian* and of the *Balto.* Thus it became feasible to sink the *Balto;* and accordingly bombs were exploded on board her, and she sank about noon.

The master of the *Seatonia* was now released from captivity and sent on board the *Varing,* where there were already 134 people, in addition to the crew. The master made the 135th. The same afternoon 25 more persons joined the party, making 160 captives in all. For the submarine had forced the crew of the Norwegian *Fordelen* to abandon her, sent them to the *Varing,* and sunk the *Fordelen.*

The submarine officer sent a prize crew on board the *Varing,* and at midnight the German

officer in command of the *Varing* suddenly sighted a British vessel of war, and at once cleared the upper deck of all passengers.

During the nine days of the master's captivity the submarine sank the *Seatonia,* the three trawlers *Caswell, Kyoto* and *Harfat Castle,* the neutral vessels *Columbian, Balto* and *Fordelen,* seven in all, and captured the *Varing.* She had already captured the Danish trawler *Bragi,* which was acting as consort. The disposition of the captured crews was ingenious. The *Seatonia's* people went to the submarine herself, thence to the Danish consort. The *Columbian* was not put down until provision was made for her crew in the *Balto.* The crews of *Columbian* and *Balto* were both transferred from the *Balto* to the *Varing,* and then the *Balto* was sunk. The crew of the *Fordelen* also went to the *Varing,* and then the *Fordelen* was sunk.

The commanding officer of the submarine thus preserved the lives of the people whose ships he destroyed, making no distinction whatever between belligerent and neutral ships. The master of the *Seatonia* was treated not as a prisoner of war, but as a civilian prisoner. As he had not fired upon the submarine—having indeed no gun—he did in fact retain his civilian rights, which were respected.

The next morning, November 10th, the master, with one of the captive crews, was landed in a neutral port.

In the meantime the *Bragi,* according to her instructions, arrived on November 5th off a neutral port, which was her rendezvous. The

next day the submarine fetched up with the *Varing* in company. The master of the *Bragi* was again summoned on board the submarine, where he received his dismissal from the German service. He afterwards landed his passengers in a neutral port, and so departed on his own affairs, carrying in his mind a powerful objection, mentioned by the submarine officer, against carrying fish for England.

The use made by the Germans of neutral ships and neutral ports would seem to add a new meaning to the accepted notion of neutrality.

XXII

"A Cheerful Note"

"Thus sang they in the English boat
A holy and a cheerful note."—A. Marvell.

The master of the *City of Birmingham,* left alone on board his ship, which was sinking under him, collected his confidential books and papers, stowed them in a weighted bag, went on the bridge and hove them overboard.

Pulling away from the ship over the smooth swell were seven boats laden with passengers. Across the water floated the pleasant sound of women's voices, singing. . . .

The sound was a gracious, unconscious testimony to the master's forethought, skill and hardihood. A little more than ten minutes ago all the people in the boats had been snug in the ship, which was steaming peacefully at thirteen knots: all men on duty at their stations, everything correct, no sign of an enemy. There were a crew of 145, of whom 29 were British and 116 were Lascars, and passengers numbering 170, of whom about 90 were women and children. There was no warning ere the torpedo struck the vessel.

The master on the bridge perceived that the after half of the ship was under water. He had stayed by his ship to the last, and now it was time for him to go. He swung himself from the bridge and ran to the forecastle head, and as he reached it the ship went down, taking the master with her. He came to the surface, struck out, swam to a couple of floating planks and clung to them. It was November 27th, 1916, and the water of the Mediterranean was very cold.

To the master, adrift on the last remnant of his fine ship, still came the sound of women's voices, singing; but they seemed very far off. Rising and falling on the long slopes of the swell, the master could see the boats no longer. It occurred to him that they could not see him, either. Would they conclude he was drowned with his ship? Would each boat think the other had him on board? Would he be left to perish, alone among the people in the ship, the people whom he had saved?

Swinging drenched on his wreckage, the master saw again the trim clean ship, the look-outs at their stations, the gunners standing by their gun, and felt again the tremendous blow of the torpedo, striking fifteen feet under water, and the trembling of the wounded vessel. Then began the test of his drill and organisation. Every officer and man went to his boat station; all passengers, lifebelts slung upon them, went as steadily to their boats as the crew. The engineer reversed engines and stopped the way of the ship, though the steam was pouring out of the saloon windows; the wireless operator

sent out calls and received a reply; the boats were swung out and safely launched. And all inside ten minutes.

No master could have achieved more. And there he was adrift. Where were the boats? Minute by minute passed and no boat came. "He saved others . . ." But still the sound of women's voices, singing, hung in the air. So soon as they were in the boats, they struck up that brave chant, to show that all was well and that nothing dismayed them.

The master, after the manner of British seamen, continued to hang on, let come what would come. Half an hour may be as half a year to a drowning man. And the remorseless interminable minutes lagged one after another to nearly thirty ere the master caught the beat of oars, and beheld the prow of a boat cleaving the crest of the swell above him.

Once on board the boat the master instantly took command again. He signalled to the other boats to come together, and ordered them to pull eastwards, where a plume of smoke blurred the horizon.

The steamer was presently observed to be approaching, and by four o'clock the whole of the shipwrecked people were on board the hospital ship *Letitia.* The *City of Birmingham* had been torpedoed at 11.15; every soul on board except the master was clear of her ten minutes later; at 11.45 she sank, and by four o'clock all were rescued.

So soon as the people were on board the *Letitia,* the master called the roll of the passen-

gers and mustered the crew. He found that four lives in all had been lost between the time of the explosion and the pulling away of the boats. The ship's doctor, who was an old man; the barman, who seems to have been of unstable temperament, and who fell into the water; and two Lascars: these were drowned.

Neither the submarine nor the torpedo was seen.

The master in his report stated that "the women especially showed a good example by the way in which they took their places in the boats, as calmly as if they were going down to their meals, and when in the boats they began singing.

So might Andromeda have lifted her golden voice in praise to the immortal gods, what time the hero slew the sea-beast that would have devoured her.

XXIII

Vignette

Three hundred miles from land, in the Mediterranean, a merchant service officer crouched on a raft of wreckage, staring at a German submarine, which lay within a hundred yards of him. An English ship's boat, crammed with men, at some distance from him, was pulling towards him. The smooth sea was strewn with broken pieces of the ship, to some of which men were clinging; and a second boat was pulling to and fro, picking the men from the water. It was about half-past five in the afternoon of November 4th, 1916.

The chief officer, contemplating the enemy with a curious eye, beheld the long, yellow hull awash, the circular conning-tower rising amidships, painted a light straw colour, bearing a black number, indecipherable, and surmounted by a canvas screen, enclosing the rail. Five or six men, clad in brown, except one who wore a white sweater, lined the rail of the conning-tower, gazing at the destruction they had wrought. Forward, on the deck, beside the gun, two German officers were leisurely pointing

cameras upon the shipwrecked men. When they had taken such photographs as they desired, they departed. The submarine got under way and steered to a position where she lay in the track of steamers shortly due to pass.

The chief officer and the rest of the men were all taken into the two boats. By that time darkness was gathering. The chief officer, knowing that two steamers were coming up astern, burned red flares to warn them of their danger. In so doing he risked the vengeance of the submarine, which must have seen the flares, and which could have overhauled the boats in a few minutes, and then sent them to the bottom.

The two boats, overladen with the soaked and shivering crew, pulled and drifted in the dark for some nine hours. Early the next morning they were rescued by the hospital ship *Valdavia.*

It was at 5.25 upon the previous afternoon that their ship, the *Huntsvale,* had been struck by a torpedo fired from an unseen submarine. Her stern was blown clean off, and she sank in two minutes. The master sounded the whistle, and the wireless operator had just time and no more to send out one call of distress ere his dynamo collapsed. The master and six men lost their lives, seven killed out of forty-nine.

Immediately after the explosion the submarine rose to the surface and steered towards the scene of wreckage, while the German officers prepared their photographic apparatus. Doubtless the prints were designed for publication in Germany, to illustrate the freedom of the seas.

XXIV

"Leave Her"

"Leave her, Johnny, leave her."—*Chanty.*

Early in the morning of June 29th, 1916, the little ketch *Lady of the Lake* sailed from an Irish port for a Welsh port, her deck piled with pitwood. She sailed on a light wind all that day and the following night. She was an old boat, built at Bideford in 1862, and her master, who was her owner, was older still, numbering more than seventy sea winters. Sailing with him were a mate and a boy. By half-past seven on the morning of June 30th the *Lady of the Lake,* a leisurely matron, had strolled about twenty-five miles from the Irish coast. There sounded the report of a gun, a shot struck her, and away on the beam rose a submarine. The submarine fired again and again on the ketch. The master decided to leave her, in order, as he said, "to avoid splinters." He went about on the starboard tack so that the dinghy could be lowered, and the three men scrambled into her and pulled away, while the submarine continued to fire at the forlorn *Lady of the Lake.*

Then the submarine ran up alongside the

dinghy and the German officer, shouting and cursing, ordered the old seaman, the mate and the boy, on board the submarine. The submarine, still occasionally firing, drew toward the ketch, and forced her crew to take in their dinghy an officer and three men. The men carried bombs. The Germans went on board the *Lady of the Lake,* took everything they fancied out of her, passed the gear into the boat, placed the bombs below, and lit the fuses. The Germans were then pulled back to the submarine by the master, the mate and the boy. The poor plunder was placed on board the submarine, and the master, the mate and the boy were cast adrift in their boat without food or water. The submarine went away.

The master saw his beloved little vessel go up into the air with a horrible explosion, and her fragments litter the sea.

He hoisted an oilskin on an oar as a signal of distress, but there was no vessel in sight. So the master, the mate and the boy took to their oars and pulled for eight hours. They had made ten miles out of five-and-twenty towards the land when they were picked up by a patrol boat.

The Germans had destroyed or stolen all the old man possessed in the world, except his dinghy and the clothes he wore.

XXV

Fuel of Fire

On the night of December 7th, 1916, in a broad moonlight, a big oilship, the *Conch*, was steaming up Channel. She was bringing 7,000 tons of benzine from a far Eastern port.

Eight miles away, nearer the coast, a patrol boat was cruising. Her captain was startled by a bright flame towering upon the night, and writhing momently higher amid a vast rolling canopy of smoke, blotting out the stars. The captain of the patrol boat steered for the fire at full speed. At eight knots it was an hour or more ere the captain came in full sight of a large ship, wrapped in a roaring flame, spouting burning oil from a rent in her port side, and steaming faster than the patrol boat. From the forecastle aft she was all one flame of fire; wildly steering herself, she was yawing now to this side, now to the other; and as she sped, her wavering track blazed and smoked upon the heaving water.

The heat smote upon the faces of the men in the patrol boat as they stared upon the burning ship. The captain steered nearer to her, and at

the same moment she turned suddenly towards him, her whole bulk of fire bearing down upon the patrol boat. The captain put his helm hard over and turned away; and still she came on, dreadfully lighting the men's scared faces, revealing every detail of rope and block and guardrail; and then the patrol boat just cleared her.

The captain stood off to a safe distance and steamed parallel to the course of the burning ship, scanning her for any sign of a living creature, but he could see none, nor did it seem possible that so much as a rat could be left alive in that furnace.

After cruising thus for about an hour, and perceiving the approach of two trawlers, also on patrol duty, the first patrol boat went about her business, her captain having made up his mind that there were no men left alive in the burning ship.

But there were.

When the watch was changed on board the *Conch* at eight o'clock on the evening before, the master and the third officer went on the bridge. During that watch there were two quartermasters at the wheel; a wireless operator and a gunner were posted at the gun, aft, and there was a look-out man stationed on the forecastle head. Below, the fourth engineer was on watch, and the chief engineer was in charge. Two China-boys were stoking. The rest of the officers were either in their cabins or on deck, and the remainder of the crew were in the forecastle, where they had their quarters.

About half-past ten the chief engineer was in his cabin, whence he had been going to the engine-room from time to time, when he heard the dull report of an explosion, and simultaneously felt a heavy shock. He ran to the engine-room. Nothing had happened there; the revolutions still marked ten knots, and the needle of the telegraph dial still pointed to full speed.

The fourth engineer ran to call the second and third engineers. Swiftly as he went, the fire caught him as he dashed into the alleyway, and he must burst his way through flame and smoke. He was shockingly burned about the hands and arms, but he roused the two other engineers, and all three hurried down to the engine-room, the whole after part of the ship blazing behind them. None of the other officers was ever seen again.

In the engine-room, imprisoned by fire, were the eight people of the engine-room staff; the chief engineer, the second, third and fourth engineers and four Chinamen; eight of the fifty-six persons in the ship, of whom twelve were British and the rest Chinese.

From time to time one of the engineers tried to force his way on deck, and at each attempt he was beaten back by the flames. Thus they tried for an hour; and all the while the telegraph pointed to full speed and the ship was steaming at ten knots.

It was about midnight when the second engineer succeeded in reaching the deck. He sounded the whistle. The others joined him. The bridge was a burning ruin; flame and smoke

streamed up from the forward tanks; burning oil poured from the hull on the port side, where mine or torpedo had torn a great hole; of the four lifeboats no sign was left except the blackened and twisted davits. To the eight men it appeared that they must either be burned alive or go over the side and end the business that way.

Then they remarked the dinghy secured on chocks on the well deck. Amid the heat and flame, they hoisted her out and lowered her into the sea, where she was immediately filled with water. All the time the ship was steaming ahead and yawing. The engineers tried to get back to the engine-room to stop the engines and so stop the ship; for with way on the ship the dinghy was towing astern, and it was most difficult to embark in her. But the fire now barred the engineers from the engine-room.

What followed is a little obscure. But it is clear that the four Chinamen reached the boat by sliding down the falls, and that the fourth engineer, attempting to follow them, could not travel along the ropes with his wounded hands, so hung midway, unable to go forward or back, and then dropped into the sea, whence he never rose again. The fourth engineer had come by his hurt when he went to call the other two engineer officers. So he lost his life.

The chief engineer did not see what happened to the fourth engineer. The Chinamen in the boat told him of it. Somehow the chief engineer got into the boat, and before the second and third engineers could board her she came adrift from the ship.

The chief engineer and the four Chinamen were in the water-logged boat, and the second and third engineers were left on board the burning ship.

The people in the dinghy were not seen by the patrol boat, which was keeping pace with the *Conch* some distance away from her. The dinghy, obscured by smoke and flame, dropped swiftly astern. The chief engineer and the Chinamen kept her afloat by incessant baling; and after about an hour they sighted a steamer, rowed desperately, hailed her, and were presently taken on board.

The steamer pursued the burning ship with the intention of taking off the second and third engineers, but she could not approach near enough. By that time the flames had subsided upon the after part of the *Conch,* but she was still blazing from the bridge forward.

What happened to the second and third engineers left on board the *Conch,* their last hope drifting away astern? At some time between about half-past one in the night of December 7th-8th, when the dinghy went adrift, and three o'clock, one of the trawlers, which had been observed by the first patrol boat to be approaching, manœuvred under the stern of the *Conch,* which was still steaming ahead, and the commanding officer of the trawler told the two engineers to jump into the water, whence he hauled them on board.

Thus, with the sad exception of the fourth engineer, the engineering staff was saved. So

far as they knew, when they quitted the burning ship there were no men left on board.

But there were.

At a quarter to four on that Friday morning, December 8th, the lieutenant in command of one of his Majesty's torpedo-boat destroyers, sighted what he described as "a very large conflagration." Upon approaching the fire he perceived a great vessel burning fiercely from forecastle to stern, steaming at about eight knots, and yawing through some seven points; and huddled upon the fore-peak, like the eyes of a tortured creature, a crowd of Chinamen.

The lieutenant considered that to run his destroyer alongside a burning ship under way and out of control was impracticable. Let us now regard the seamanship of the Royal Navy.

The lieutenant lowered all his boats and ran past the stern of the *Conch,* throwing overboard life-saving rafts, lifebelts and lifebuoys, and shouting to the men to jump into the water. He turned, ran past the stern again, turned, and repeated his action. The Chinamen leaped into the water and were picked up, all except nine.

Nine paralysed Chinamen remained invisibly fettered to the ship, where during some five hours they had watched the fire steadily eating its way towards them. It is probable that they had taken opium. The flames, which had slackened on the after part of the ship, were now again blazing, the fire having ignited the bunkers, and the Chinamen had but a few minutes between them and death.

"I therefore decided," says the young naval officer who performed the deed, "that it was necessary to place —— alongside the ship, and take off the remainder of the crew."

Then followed a feat of consummate seamanship and indomitable courage.

A more hazardous evolution could hardly be devised. As the burning ship was unmanageable and swerving suddenly from side to side, a collision was almost inevitable, while to go alongside a pyramid of burning oil was to risk catching fire and exploding ammunition.

The lieutenant, steaming eight knots, keeping pace with the *Conch,* ran right alongside her windward bow, grappled the riven, red-hot hull, now burned almost down to the water-line. For a desperate ten minutes the destroyer was locked to the burning, overhanging mass, in the reek and the fierce heat and the dropping flakes of fire, while the nine wretched Chinamen, roused from the Chinese lethargy, lowered themselves one by one from the peak of the tall vessel to the deck of the destroyer.

Then the lieutenant cast off his destroyer, "which sustained slight superficial damage to guardrails and upper deck fittings." He makes no other remark of any kind. He was none too soon, for "ten minutes after —— cleared the steamer, the latter was burnt to the water-line and disappeared . . . at 7.23 a.m."

In the meantime, ere the destroyer arrived, the steamer which had rescued the chief engineer and the four Chinamen had picked out of the water five more Chinamen, while, as already

narrated, the patrol trawler had taken on board the second and third engineers. In addition, the other patrol trawler had picked up two Chinamen. Three British out of twelve, and twenty-five Chinamen out of forty-four were saved; thus, out of the whole crew of the *Conch,* twenty-eight were saved and twenty-eight were lost. The lieutenant in command of the destroyer rescued fourteen Chinamen, nine of them at the imminent hazard of his ship and all on board, by an act of skill and daring which ranks among the finest exploits of the Royal Navy.

XXVI

The Pilot's Story

"It is notorious that facts are compatible with opposite emotional comments, since the same fact will inspire entirely different feelings in different persons, and at different times in the same person; and there is no rationally deducible connection between any outer fact and the sentiments it may happen to provoke."—William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience.*

The long hoot of a steamer's syren sounded from the river, outside the red-blinded windows of the bar parlour. There were present the Widow Chailey, who was the landlady of *The Three Ships* inn, the girl Bella, who was the wife of a soldier and who served the liquor, and a hulking mass of a man, huddled in an elbow chair under the gaslight, his hard hat tilted over his eyes, his hands clasped on the top of his stick.

"A steamer calling for a boat to take off the pilot," said Bella as the syren hooted again.

"Thank Heaven another one's come in safe, then," said the Widow Chailey piously.

"What do they want to come to this town at all for, is what I ask?" said the obese man in the chair, without opening his eyes. "They

only sleep here. They got no house and pay no rates. They don't do the town any good."

"What a thing to say, Mr. Bagwell," retorted the widow, placidly scanning the evening paper. " 'Ow would we live if it wasn't for the pilots?"

"I'll have another whisky," said Mr. Bagwell, after a pause of reflection.

"I think you've had enough," said Bella. But she brought it. Then she sat down at the table with a sigh and began to knit.

Silence; a silence pervaded with the sense of moving life on the dark river without. Presently a bell jangled in the entrance hall and Bella, with another sigh, left the parlour.

Then there entered a tanned, sharp-featured, bright-eyed man, and dropped a heavy bag under the table.

"Good evening, ma'am. I ain't been here before, but you'll take me in, I know. I been putting up at your opposite number's for years —and then they quarrelled with me. You and I won't quarrel, shall us? For I ain't a quarrelling man by nature," said the pilot, settling himself on the bench against the wall. "Now, then. One all round, my dear. Whisky's mine."

The somnolent Mr. Bagwell received his libation in silence. The Widow Chailey took a glass of port, and Bella sipped a dark liquid which she said was a tonic. Herein she was wise, for to have accepted all the liquor offered to her was impossible.

"Cheero," said the pilot. "Another. I need it. Another for you, old sport. It'll liven you up, perhaps." Mr. Bagwell received his glass,

drank its contents, and shut his eyes again. "Another," said the pilot. "Now we're all comfortable. Aren't us?"

"Had a good passage, I hope," said the widow.

"Mustn't grumble in war-times," said the pilot. He raised his eyebrows and pointed interrogatively to the moveless Bagwell.

"He's all right," responded the widow tranquilly. "Collector of rates. Most respectable —when he hasn't had a drop too much."

The pilot drank off his potion at a breath. "Another," he said. "And the same for our leading citizen here." His white teeth gleamed, and his eyes, under sharply narrowing lids, shone like points of glass, as Bella sat down beside him.

"What happened, then?" said Bella persuasively. "Tell us."

The pilot slipped his arm round the girl's waist.

"I'll tell you, my dear," he said. "Thirty-six hours I been on the bridge before I came off just now. It's a neutral ship I brought in, so there's no harm in telling. I boarded her up north. The captain says, 'I dam glad to see you,' he says. 'Now I sleep.' He hadn't had his clothes off for six days and nights, and no sleep, only cat-naps. His eyes was bloodshot and he was all bowed together like a old man. 'I dessay you'll wake in Heaven with the rest of us,' said I, 'and why shouldn't you?' 'I got wife and children in Stavanger,' he says, and cripples down to his cabin. I had the Admiralty instructions, of course, but there

wasn't much consolation in *them*. But no man dies before his time. Another, my dear, and one more all round."

Mr. Bagwell, aroused by the arrival of another drink, appeared to listen.

"Not but what," pursued the pilot meditatively, "the further question arises, When *is* his time? However, these things don't trouble us much at sea. A fine clear evening it was when we left port, and the bells was ringing in the town, and all the people was walking on the pier. One of the crew, an Englishman, sits on the fo'c'sle playing a tune on a penny whistle he had, and very well he done it. All of a sudden, up comes the old man from below, his hair all on end. 'What,' he shouts, stamping in his slippers, 'you haf no more feeling for the ship that you make music in this danger!' The Englishman laughed at him. 'I was only tryin' to get a little serciety feelin' into the ship,' says he. 'A little cordiality, like.' I told the old man submarines didn't come for whistlin', and persuaded him back to bed.

"Now I tell you," continued the pilot—"another all round, and thank you, my dear—whenever I take charge of a ship, I know I'm in for a gamble with God Almighty. Before the war, barring accidents what no one can foresee, I knew for a certainty I could take the ship in perfec' safety from port to port. I've never had no accident, not in twenty years, calm or storm, fog or what not—never one single accident. But now, what is it? You station a couple of A.B.'s forward, and a man in the cross-trees, and two

more hands aft, all a-looking out till their eyes is bursting out of their heads and they think every bit of wreckage is a periscope. I seen 'em call up a fireman in the middle of the night to look overboard, because they thought him knowing all about machinery could reco'nise a periscope if he saw it—which, coming up from the light below to thick darkness, he couldn't see nothing at all. But what's the use? All the time you can't see—but *you can be seen.* And if it's a mine, it's the same—you can't see it in the night, or in broken water. And either you get the ship through or you don't. It's pure chance. And that," said the pilot, "is what we have to contend with."

"I'm glad," Bella remarked, "that my boy's in Mesopotamia."

"What can it be like, I often wonder?" said the Widow Chailey placidly.

"Abso*lute*ly rotten," said the pilot, comprehensively. "That same evening, as it was getting dark, and we was feeling our way along—for there's no lights now—I see a fine big vessel about three miles off, and the next moment there was a great black burst of smoke, and a noise like a ton o' coal shot into the hold. I see the ship break in two amidships and down she went. Gone!

"What could we do? Nothing. I kept my course, zig-zagging, all the night; and twice another ship was right on top of us and I saved the ship by inches. Could have pushed the other ship off with my hand, very near. And next morning, just before the sunrise, when it's all

cold and dim, and a man's inside falls to zero, if you know what I mean, a steamship was passing us to port, black against the sky, when up goes the cloud of smoke again, like a clap of thunder, and down she went, nose first, inside three minutes. Two! It might have been us, but it just wasn't. And that evening, down went a vessel not a mile ahead of us. Three! Three in one trip.

"The captain was shot up on deck out of his ship after every explosion just as if he'd been exploded himself, and last of all he says, 'It is enough. I not go to sea never again.' But of course he will. Where else can he go? After that third poor ship was put down I was glad enough to think we should be in port in three or four hours. But we was ten minutes late of Admiralty closing time, and had to cruise up and down all night long. That was the worst of all.

"For a man," continued the pilot, "sets himself to last a certain time like a chronometer, and when that time's exceeded, he 'as to wind himself up all over again. Drink would do it, but I never touch liquor on duty. . . . Another, miss, and one more all round, and then I'm for bed. What cheer, old sport? Got something on your mind, have you?"

Mr. Bagwell, thus addressed, drank his liquor, and regarded the pilot with a vindictive eye.

"Yes, I have," said Mr. Bagwell. "And I'll tell you what it is, straight. You're no better than a thief, you are. You're a pernicious water-rat. You're a ruddy interloper in this

town. You come and you go, and you pay no rates and you're a flagrant disgrace. One of these days you'll get it in the neck, so I warn you. In the neck. And serve you damn well right."

The pilot surveyed his accuser with a cheerful smile.

"I don't know what I done to you, old friend, excep' hand you out one now and again," said the pilot, blandly.

Then Mr. Bagwell laboriously repeated his words, as though they were a lesson he had learned by heart.

" 'Ow can you say such things, and him bringing food into the country and risking his life?" said the Widow Chailey, mildly reproachful.

"Now look here," said the pilot, still immovably serene, "answer me this one question. Do you know what you're a-saying? Or do you not?"

Mr. Bagwell appeared to be earnestly interrogating his consciousness.

"No, I do not," he said finally.

The pilot smiled upon him in silence.

"You'd better be going home," said the widow firmly.

Mr. Bagwell rose without a word, and lumbered out of the room and out of the house.

"Such a pity," said the Widow Chailey; "he always gets abusive when he 'as a drop of drink in him.

"Some of the customers don't like it," said the widow.

XXVII

Three Prisoners

The Austrian submarine which had just torpedoed and sunk the steamship *Andoni* drew alongside the boat in which were the master and a party of the crew of the *Andoni.* The two officers on the conning-tower looked down upon their victims. The commanding officer of the submarine was slight of figure and bearded; the lieutenant of fair complexion and clean shaven. A group of men, clad in slate-coloured dress, stood on the deck, aft of the conning-tower.

The lieutenant asked the master if he had any papers, to which the master replied "No."

"Come on board," said the lieutenant. "You are a prisoner of war. We are friends no longer."

To torpedo a man's ship, which so far had been the extent of the commerce between the Austrian officers and the master of the *Andoni,* was a singular exhibition of friendship. So the master may have thought as he stepped on board the enemy and disappeared below.

The lieutenant produced two letters, and gave them to the second officer in the boat,

requesting him to post them. The second officer, reading the addresses on the envelope, perceived to his surprise that they were addressed in English handwriting to persons in England. He did not know then what was afterwards discovered, that the letters were written respectively by two British masters who were already immured in the submarine. That was the only sign of their existence: two letters dumbly appearing from the belly of the enemy. The master of the *Andoni,* on going below, found two friends to make up for the loss of the friendship of the Austrians. The submarine departed, carrying the three British prisoners—whither?

The *Andoni* was torpedoed in the Mediterranean, about fifty miles from Malta, at 7.35 on the morning of January 8th, 1917. She sank in twelve minutes. A gun-layer and two coloured firemen were killed. At half-past five the same evening the rest of the crew were picked up by a patrol vessel.

The first of the British masters to be captured by the Austrian submarine was the master of the *Lesbian.* He made a running fight of it. That was on Friday, January 5th, 1917. About half-past three in the afternoon, when the *Lesbian* was steaming at ten knots on a zig-zag course, the submarine emerged some three miles astern and opened fire.

The master instantly ordered the gunners to reply, and their second shot fell close to the submarine, which thereupon dropped further astern, to a position from which she could outrange the gun of the *Lesbian.*

The master, although he was outranged, tried to confuse and blind the submarine gunner by maintaining a rapid fire, but the shells of the enemy continued to fall all about the *Lesbian* and one pierced her stern. Thus the chase went on; the *Lesbian,* strung to full speed, running in a hail of shells, wreathed in smoke, fountains of water leaping alongside her, distress signal-rockets rushing upwards and burning; and far astern the low grey conning-tower of the hunter came ploughing behind on a white bow-wave, with tongues of fire and smoke blown behind her and drifting over the bright sea.

At a few minutes past four, the action having lasted nearly three-quarters of an hour, the master, seeing that his ammunition was nearly exhausted, hoisted the signal of surrender, stopped the ship, and ordered the crew into the boats.

The rapidly approaching submarine continued to fire, while the crew were getting away the two lifeboats and the cutter. The shells struck the ship, several among the crew were wounded, and the master was hurt in the head and leg. A shell struck the water close to one of the boats and made it leak. As the boats cleared the ship, she listed to port and began to settle down by the stern.

The submarine drew alongside the boat in which was the master, and the commanding officer ordered him aboard. The submarine then ordered the boats "to clear out."

"What about the master?" said the chief officer.

"He is stopping here. You clear out," returned the Austrian, and proceeded to lay his submarine alongside the abandoned and slowly sinking ship. That was the last the men in the boats saw of the submarine—the shark side by side with the dying whale.

The three boats were left 120 miles from Malta. The chief officer divided the crew of the cutter between the two lifeboats and abandoned the cutter.

In one boat were the chief officer and a crew of seventeen, and in the other boat were the second officer and a crew of seventeen. Both boats hoisted sail and steered for Malta. It was then about five in the afternoon, the dark falling on a smooth sea, with a favourable breeze blowing from the south-east.

The two boats sailed in company all that night; but the next morning each was lost to sight of the other in the haze.

The chief officer held on all that day, January 6th, and all that night. The next morning the wind shifted to the north-west, dead ahead on the course the chief officer was steering, and he decided to go about and run for the Greek coast.

They had already been sailing in an open boat for two nights and a day. The boat was provisioned with meat, biscuits and water, but no one knew for how long the stock would be required.

Then began a dreadful voyage of shifting winds, heavy seas, and deadly cold. Concerning its incidents, the chief officer is silent, mentioning only that, although several ships were sight-

ed, none answered their signals. But we know that he and his men endured for ten more days and ten more nights; and at noon on January 17th they fetched up in a Greek port. By that time all the meat was gone, and there were only a few biscuits and a little water left. All were greatly exhausted and some suffered from swollen feet.

The Greek peasants took them in and did what they could for the castaways, until the French authorities conveyed them to hospital. In a fortnight all save three were fit to travel.

In the meantime the second officer had better luck. He landed on the coast of Sicily on the 7th, after sailing two nights and the better part of two days.

When the boats of the *Lesbian* had been two nights and a day at sea the Austrian submarine, with the master of the *Lesbian* on board, was cruising not far from them.

On the afternoon of January 7th, the submarine sighted the steamship *Mohacsfield* and opened fire upon her. The *Mohacsfield,* retreating at full speed, returned the fire, and the chase continued for an hour.

It was the usual story. The *Mohacsfield* was outranged and outpaced; she was hit, and the second officer and the steward were killed; the mate and a fireman were wounded, and then the master was compelled to abandon ship.

The submarine took the master on board as prisoner of war; and thus the master of the *Lesbian* and the master of the *Mohacsfield* made acquaintance and exchanged narratives; and

perhaps one quoted to the other the words of the wild Hungarian song: *"But no matter, more was lost on Mohacsfield";* and perhaps not. The *Mohacsfield* was sunk by a torpedo.

The next day, January 8th, as already related, the master of the *Andoni* joined the party; and it was then that the two masters already on board prevailed on the Austrian officer to send their letters home; the two letters which were handed out from the depths of the submarine to the second officer of the *Andoni.* The rest, so far, is silence.

The master of the *Andoni* had lost his ship by a torpedo fired from the submarine invisible beneath the surface. The masters of the *Lesbian* and the *Mohacsfield* had fought their ships to the last moment. Now all three were prisoners.

XXVIII

Hide-and-Seek in the Bay

Off the Spanish coast on January 23rd, 1917, the steamship *Jevington* was steering east, in misty, squally weather, the sea running in the long, mountainous swell of the Bay of Biscay.

At two o'clock in the afternoon the master, going on the bridge, perceived a small steamer about five miles away, steering south. Through the mist the master was unable to decipher her ensign or the name and colours painted on her side. Presently the strange vessel was blotted out by the driving rain.

A little after, the master sighted a fishing vessel, with two lug-sails, steering northwards as though she had just parted company from the strange steamship. Watching her, the master saw her alter course, as if to cross the bows of the *Jevington;* and then, in her turn, she vanished in a rain-squall. When the squall had passed the ring of haze closing in the *Jevington* had narrowed, and there was nothing to be seen on all the high, broken surges of the swell.

It was about an hour and a half after the strange steamship had been sighted, when the master and the second mate, who were both on

the bridge, exclaimed at the same moment, "There's a submarine!"

About 200 yards away on the port bow the periscope was projected above the surface, followed by the top of the conning-tower. The next moment the ship was struck. There was an explosion on the port side; the hatches of the hold were blown in fragments into the air; the derrick leaped twelve feet upwards and crashed down on deck by the starboard rail, and the water spouted up through the hold, flooding the deck.

The master instantly ordered the engines to be reversed to stop the way of the ship, and ordered all hands into the boats. While they were getting away he burned his confidential papers in the galley stove.

In spite of the heavy run of sea, the boats were safely launched, and they pulled hard from the ship for about a quarter of a mile. Then they lay on their oars and watched the submarine nosing round the water-logged ship. The submarine had hoisted the German ensign, and presently approached the two boats. The chief officer pulled to meet her.

The commanding officer of the submarine hailed the chief officer, asking him what he wanted. The chief officer replied that he wanted to return to the *Jevington* to fetch dry clothing. The submarine officer refused to grant the request. It was, he said, too risky to return to the ship.

He laid the submarine alongside the chief officer's boat, and the chief officer noted that

the German commander was a small man, clean shaven, and that the lieutenant standing beside him on the conning-tower was of the larger, fair-complexioned German type. Some twelve men were on the deck of the submarine. Officers and men alike were dressed in dark green jackets and oilskin trousers, the officers having uniform caps.

The little German captain caused six suits of good clothing to be handed out to the chief officer. Then he asked for the captain, who was in the other boat, ordered the chief officer to cruise about where he was, telling him that another vessel would come to pick him up, and went away to the master's boat.

The chief officer, sighting the strange steamer which had passed southward earlier in the afternoon, and which was now approaching at a distance of about four miles, pulled towards her, and he and his crew were taken on board.

She was a Norwegian vessel, the *Donstad,* which had been captured early in the morning, and which was impressed by the submarine officer to serve as his consort. On board was a German prize crew of six men under the command of an officer.

In the meantime the submarine officer, drawing alongside the master's boat, ordered him to come on board. Being requested to produce his papers, the master gave the German the *Jevington's* bills of lading, ship's register, and French bill of health—for what they were worth, which was not much.

The submarine officer ordered the master to

return to his boat, and when he was in it again the little German captain photographed his captives. He then ordered them to remain where they were, and told them, as he had told the chief officer, that he would send a vessel to pick them up.

The submarine got under way and departed, and the master's boat tossed in the thickening darkness for an hour or more, when the people in the boat observed the lights of two steamers, one to the north and the other to the north-west.

They saw a gun-flash near by the vessel to the north-west. The master of the *Jevington* decided to pull towards the other steamer. As he drew near he recognised her to be the strange vessel he had sighted early in the afternoon. She was the *Donstad,* which had already picked up the chief officer's boat, and which now took the master and his boat's crew on board. The *Jevington's* people were searched by the German guard, who robbed the second engineer of money and trinkets. That petty larceny shows how the German sailor is foreign to the tradition of the sea.

The submarine having collected the steamer at which she had fired, brought her close to the *Donstad.* She was the *Leonora,* a Spaniard. The submarine officer now ordered the German officer in command of the *Donstad* to send to him the master of the *Jevington.*

At this time, between seven and eight of a dark and stormy night, the submarine, burning side-lights, and the two captured neutral

steamers, *Donstad* and *Leonora,* with all lights burning, lay stopped and near to one another; and a little way off, hidden in the darkness, the *Jevington* rolled deserted, her decks awash.

The master of the *Jevington* was pulled across to the submarine by two of his own men and a German sailor. When the master was on board the submarine, the submarine officer had two bombs placed in the boat, and the men rowed her across to the *Jevington.* The master did not see his ship sunk, but he was told that she had been destroyed.

The submarine officer informed the master that he had captured the Spanish steamship expressly for the purpose of taking the other officers and the men of the *Jevington* to Liverpool, and that the master himself was to be sent to Germany. He had orders, he said, that *all* British masters captured should be brought to Germany. For the time being, the master was to remain on the *Donstad.*

Then the master, with this agreeable prospect in his mind, was sent back to the *Donstad;* and his state was not improved by a painful accident which befell him. Climbing up the side of the *Donstad,* the escape of water from a steam heater scalded his leg.

The rest of the *Jevington's* people were now transhipped from the *Donstad* to the *Leonora* in four trips. They were all on board by ten o'clock, and all the time the two steamers and the submarine lay with lights burning.

The master, with a scalded leg, was left in the *Donstad.* As for the rest of the officers and the

men of the *Jevington,* they were punctually and safely landed at Liverpool on January 27th, as the submarine officer had said.

During the next few days the master of the *Jevington* watched the operations of the submarine and her consort the *Donstad* cruising about the Bay, waiting for ships. The *Donstad* from time to time received her course from the submarine, and the two vessels were in constant communication by signal in the daytime and by Morse lamp at night. The *Donstad* carried all lights at night. The next day, January 24th, a gale blew up from the south with a rising sea. The master was allowed on the bridge, and was even welcomed in the chart-house, where he was shown the varying course and position of the *Donstad,* sent hither and thither by the submarine. He was profoundly interested in the submarine's behaviour in heavy weather. "Although a very heavy S.S.W. sea was running," he reports, "she kept above water, and appeared quite steady, and no water breaking over her turret."

This happy family party continued until the 27th, when the submarine ordered all the people in the *Donstad* to come on board at daylight. The master went with the crew of the *Donstad* in her boats. The German prize crew followed, with provisions and plunder, having first ignited the fuses of the bombs, which presently exploded, sinking the *Donstad.*

The master reported himself sick to the commanding officer of the submarine. He said his leg was very bad, and might he lie down?

The little German captain sent the master below, and gave instructions that his wound was to be dressed and that he was to be given a berth, an order which involved the deprivation of his berth of another officer.

So the master lay in the German's bunk, with a pain in his leg and a pain in his mind, as he contemplated the prospect of a voyage in the submarine with a prison at the end of it.

His fine ship was gone, his crew vanished. His possessions had gone down with the ship. As a man stricken with sickness remembers what he was in health, and marvels how happy he has been without knowing it, so the master recalled the voyage. He had been anxious, but day after day had gone by, and he had come through, till he was within three or four days of home. He traversed every incident of that misty day of wind and squalls; the apparition of the steamer steering south, the little sailing craft which stole from behind her, and which he now knew to have been a submarine; the interval during which all seemed well; then the periscope terribly shooting up ahead, and the blow of the torpedo, which told him that all was over, while his head yet rung with the noise of the explosion. . . . Ought he to have done this? Ought he to have done that? Why did he not think of the other? Then came the wet and cheerless tossing in the boats, under the peremptory orders of the German officer; his tedious days of suspense on board the German prize, with the added worry of his wounded leg; and now he lay captive in this fetid cell, the

remorseless clashing of the engines in his ears. He might be there for two or three weeks, for the submarine, instead of risking the Channel, might go home north about Scotland and down the North Sea to a German port. And, also, she might be sunk on the way by a British ship of war.

Truly it seemed to the master that he had been brought very low. And, like a number of other people, he was furious with some person or persons unknown, by whose fault or default these things had befallen him. . . . He did not know, then, any more than you, the reader (if you have been playing fair), that his story was to have a happy ending.

At three o'clock in the afternoon someone told him that a steamer was in sight, and half an hour later the submarine submerged. The master, from his bunk, watched the German officer peering into the mirror of the periscope, which he swung on its pivot by two handles fixed at about the level of his eyes. The German, having read the name of the unconscious vessel, which was the *Fulton,* of Bergen, and had the Norwegian flag blazoned on her side, called the master of the *Donstad* to the periscope to find if he knew this ship of his own country.

The master of the *Donstad* seems to have satisfied the Germans that the ship was of Norway, and that she carried no gun, for the submarine came to the surface astern of the *Fulton,* and sounded the syren as a signal she was to stop. The ship stopped accordingly. The master lay in his bunk while the Germans ascended to the deck and descended again, and there was

coming and going, and an armed party quitted the submarine.

The commanding officer of the submarine took possession of the *Fulton,* sending a prize crew on board.

Then the master was suddenly ordered on deck, together with the master and crew of the *Donstad.* The master was informed by the commanding officer of the submarine that although his orders were to take all captured British masters to Germany, as it had been reported to him that the master was suffering from a wounded leg, the master would be sent on shore with the crew of the *Donstad.* So that when the engineer of the *Donstad* permitted a leak in his heating apparatus, he was unconsciously serving as a wedge in the hand of destiny, which presently drove the master of the *Jevington* apart from captivity and prison. The commanding officer of the submarine may receive all due credit for compassion. It is also the case that a sick man, especially if he occupies an officer's berth, is very inconvenient in a submarine.

On January 27th, the day on which the crew of the *Jevington* were landed at Liverpool by the *Leonora,* the master of the *Jevington* was landed from the lifeboat of the *Fulton,* another neutral ship, at a Spanish port. The crew of the *Fulton* and the crew of the *Donstad* were landed at the same time. The *Fulton* herself, manned by the German prize crew, proceeded to sea. So far as Norway is concerned, her mercantile marine might as well be owned by Germany.

XXIX

"But Nine of Her Crew Alive"

Nine o'clock on the morning of January 27th, 1917, in very dirty weather, in the North Atlantic. One of his Majesty's patrol boats fighting out a full easterly gale with a breaking sea, smothered in water, violently flung to and fro. To the lieutenant-commander, R.N.R., comes a messenger with a signal pad, on which is neatly written an intercepted wireless S.O.S. call: "S.S. *Artist* sinking rapidly, mined or torpedoed in ——" then followed her position. The lieutenant-commander replied by wireless that he was proceeding to her assistance. No answer came, then or afterwards. The lieutenant-commander increased his speed up to the limit the boat could stand in that sea, and steered for the spot indicated. He shoved along for two hours; then, as the vessel was being strained and the engines were racing, he reduced speed; an hour later he was obliged again to reduce speed. At half-past one he arrived at the position indicated. There was nothing but the boiling waste of waters.

The lieutenant-commander cruised twelve miles in one direction and twelve miles in another; the wind increasing, the sea rising higher, the cold very bitter.

At three o'clock in the afternoon the lieutenant-commander was obliged to heave-to. He did not think that in such weather the boats of the sinking ship could have been launched, or if they were launched, that they could live. That night it blew harder than ever, and the thermometer fell to 37 degrees. At nine o'clock the next morning the lieutenant-commander went to succour another ship in distress, and so passes out of this story.

He was right and wrong in his surmise. A little after the lieutenant-commander had received the S.O.S. call from the *Artist,* the boats had been launched from her, and one lived. While the lieutenant-commander, the same afternoon, was beating to and fro in the raging sea and icy spindrift, there was a boat with its miserable crew somewhere near.

It was between eight and nine on that Saturday morning, January 27th, 1917, when the *Artist's* wireless operator sent out his call. The *Artist,* sailing from an American port, had run right into the gale; and she had been hove-to for three nights and two days. Between eight and nine in the morning, without a sign of a submarine, the dull boom of an explosion roared through the tumult of the gale, and a torpedo, striking the starboard side forward, tore a huge hole close upon the water-line.

There was not a moment to lose. The violent

pitching of the ship, lying head to sea, ominously slackened as she began to settle by the head. The sea poured over her bows and swept the decks from stem to stern. Waist-deep in water, the crew struggled desperately to lower the three lifeboats. In one boat were the master with the second and third officers and part of the crew; in another were the chief officer and part of the crew; and in the third were a cadet and part of the crew. What followed is taken from the cadet's narrative.

He was in his boat, which was swung out on the falls, and he saw the chief officer's boat, also swung out, dashed against the ship's side as she rolled, and broken. The next moment the cadet's boat was borne upwards by a rising wave, so that the after fall was pushed upwards and thus unhooked. As the boat was left hanging by the bows her stern dropped suddenly. Two men were flung overboard and sank at once. The next wave bodily lifting the boat on an even keel, enabled the cadet to unhook the foremost fall, and the men, pulling hard, got clear of the ship.

As he pulled clear, the cadet saw the chief officer's boat filled with water to the gunwale, broadside on to the tremendous sea, and helpless. She was never seen again.

In the meanwhile the master's boat had also pulled clear of the sinking ship. Both boats laid out sea anchors and drifted in sight of each other all that terrible day.

There were forty-five persons in all on board the *Artist* when she was torpedoed. Some had

gone down in the chief officer's boat, some were in the captain's boat, and in the cadet's boat were sixteen persons.

That night, the night of January 27th, as the lieutenant-commander stated, the gale increased in violence and the thermometer dropped to 37 degrees. Somehow, the frozen, wet, exhausted men must keep baling out the boat, and her head to the sea. Concerning the horrors of that night the cadet says nothing. It is possible that the partial paralysis of the faculties, induced by long exposure, dulls the memory. There is no consciousness of time, but a quite hopeless conviction of eternity. The state of men enduring prolonged and intense hardship seems to them to have had no beginning and to have no end. After a period of acute suffering, varying according to the individual, the edge of pain is blunted and numbness sets in. In many cases the retardation of the circulation, withdrawing the full supply of blood to the head, causes delirium, in which men shout and babble, drink salt water, and leap overboard. By degrees the heart's action is weakened, and finally stops. Then the man dies. Seven men in the cadet's boat did in fact die.

After the night of the 27th the captain's boat was no more seen. The cadet and his crew alone were left of the people of the *Artist*.

They drifted in the gale all that Sunday, the 28th, all Monday, all Monday night. Men died, one after another, and the pitiless sea received their bodies. When each one passed the cadet

does not state. Probably he could not remember. For the survivors were dying, too. They were dying upwards from their feet, in which frostbite had set in. One man, a fireman, endured the agony of a broken arm. . . .

On the night of January 29th-30th, when the castaways had been adrift for three days and three nights, they saw the distant lights of land towards the north. The wind and sea began to go down, and at daylight the crew hoisted sail and steered north. At a little after nine on that Tuesday morning, exactly seventy-two hours since they had cleared the sinking ship, they sighted the smoke of an outward-bound steamer. Twenty minutes later nine men were taken on board, and one dead man was left in the boat.

The rescued men were transferred to a patrol boat, which landed them in an Irish port the same evening. Here, says the cadet, "the Shipwrecked Mariners' authorities took care of us and did all they possibly could for us."

Five of the nine survivors were placed in hospital. The remaining four, of whom the sturdy cadet was one, speedily recovered.

The boat with the dead man in her was picked up by a patrol vessel.

A brief official account of the affair was published at the time by the Secretary of the Admiralty, who remarked that "The pledge given by Germany to the United States not to sink merchant ships without ensuring the safety of the passengers and crews has been broken be-

fore, but never in circumstances of more cold-blooded brutality.''

But when it comes to brutality the Germans can do better than that, as will be seen. What's the use of talking?

XXX

Dead Men's Luck

On the evening of Sunday, February 4th, 1917, the steamship *Dauntless* was in the northern part of the Bay of Biscay, outward bound with a cargo of coal. At six o'clock the master and the second officer were on the bridge, keeping a vigilant watch in the clear darkness, whitened by the foam of a heaving sea. There was nothing in sight, when there came the report of a gun, and a shell sang over the bridge, and then another. One passed through the funnel, the other smashed the steering-gear, so that when the master tried to put the helm over it jammed, and the *Dauntless* went straight on. The man at the wheel was wounded in the leg. The master was wounded in the right shoulder and left arm. Projectiles whistled from out the darkness. The ship was hit and a fireman was killed. The master stopped the ship and blew four blasts on the whistle, signifying that the ship was being abandoned. The invisible submarine continued to fire. The two lifeboats were got away under shell fire and rifle fire. Two men, one on either side the second officer, were wounded as they were embarking in the star-

board lifeboat. The chief officer seems to have been in command of the port lifeboat, but there is a doubt on this point. For the moment the port lifeboat disappears, for her crew rowed away and were no more seen by the people in the master's boat. It is necessary to be particular about the boats, as will appear. We have now to do with the starboard lifeboat, in which were the master and seventeen others. One dead man was left in the ship. The master and three men were wounded.

It was then about half-past six. The submarine hove into view and drew alongside the master's boat. She bore the marks of usage and her gun was rusty. Officers and men wore blue uniform. The commanding officer ordered the master and the crew on board the submarine. Then the submarine officer asked the master if there was anyone left in the *Dauntless.* Upon being told that the ship was deserted, save for one dead man, the German officer ordered some of his men to go on board her in the master's boat. He presented a revolver at the master's head, telling him that if anyone was found alive in the *Dauntless* the master would immediately be shot.

What the Germans were after was plunder. The men of the *Dauntless,* sullenly grouped upon the deck of the submarine, during an hour or so contemplated the pirates bringing loot from the *Dauntless* to the submarine in the *Dauntless's* jolly-boat, which had been left on board, and the starboard lifeboat. The second officer saw tinned provisions, enamel paint and

turpentine, among other things, handed up from the boats.

At about eight o'clock, when the boats were emptied, the men of the *Dauntless,* gazing at the dim ship looming on the dark, saw a red flash leap from her, and heard a dull explosion, and the dim ship disappeared.

The submarine officer ordered the master and the crew of the *Dauntless* into the starboard lifeboat. But when the master represented that the lifeboat had been damaged by gunfire and was leaking, the German kindly allowed the master to take the jolly-boat also. The master divided the crew between the two boats. In the jolly-boat were the master, the second officer, the chief, second and third engineers, the steward and a fireman; seven persons in all. The rest went away in the leaking starboard lifeboat, which soon afterwards parted from the master's boat, and was never seen again.

Already the port lifeboat had gone away; but her story is to come. With the starboard lifeboat we have no more to do. There remains the jolly-boat.

As she parted from the submarine the master asked a German if the land was five miles away, and the German replied "More." There is indeed some uncertainty as to the exact position from which the boats started, as there was an increasing easterly wind, and also the drift of the current in those waters.

It is not known if there were provisions in the starboard lifeboat which went away and was no more seen. But it is quite certain that

the Germans, having stolen all the provisions they could find in the *Dauntless,* sent the seven people adrift in the jolly-boat without food or water, in rough weather, and one of them, the master, badly wounded.

The master, despite the shrapnel bullets he carried in his left arm and shoulder, steered; the other six men rowed, and went on rowing. The wind and sea had risen, and were dead against the easterly course steered by the master; the cold was extreme, with occasional storms of snow. They rowed all that night. At about six o'clock the next morning the steward fell forward, dead.

They went on rowing all that day, Monday, without bite or sup; cold, wet, tormented by thirst, their tongues swelling, their lips black, their skin cracking with the salt spray and the bitter wind; still the five men rowed, and the dead man lay in the bottom of the boat, and the master steered. In the evening they committed the body of the steward to the deep. Then they sighted land. It was near nightfall; a thick shower of snow drove down and they lost the lie of the land, though it was no more than three or four miles away.

They rowed all that night. At daylight, next morning, Tuesday, February 6th, they sighted land again, and so they went on rowing. They saw the breakers bursting all along the beach; but, wholly spent, they could do no more than keep the boat just moving; and as her nose touched ground a wave capsized her, and the six men were flung into the surf.

They struggled up on the beach and fell down. Two of them, the second engineer and the fireman, then and there died on the wet sand where they lay.

About half-past ten on that Tuesday morning a French coastguardsman, fully armed, was marching his lonely beat along the shore, when he saw four bowed figures stumbling towards him in the distance. A little beyond them a capsized boat was tossing in the surf.

The Frenchman, with admirable presence of mind, immediately decided that four German sailors had landed. He drew his revolver, and, swiftly approaching the strangers, commanded them to put up their hands. Three of them stiffly lifted swollen hands; the fourth tried to lift his arms a little. They stared upon him with faces like the faces of men in torment, and one began to speak, uttering strange sounds, thickly and slowly, framing the same words over and over again, with a kind of pitiful desperation.

And presently the French coastguardsman saw light. Ah, what a change! And there was his little house, where the English could rest until they were taken away by the authorities to hospital.

Ten days later, the master had so far recovered that he was able to leave his bed, and the second officer, the chief engineer and the third engineer were at home in England.

When the six men in the jolly-boat reached land they had been adrift during nearly forty hours. That was on Tuesday, February

6th. Where, during that time, was the port lifeboat? No one knew. All that the survivors in the jolly-boat knew was that when the boats were lowered from the *Dauntless,* the port lifeboat had gone away with four (or five) men in her.

The *Dauntless* was abandoned on Sunday evening, February 4th. On the following Friday, the 9th, a Spanish trawler, cruising in the Bay of Biscay, sighted a boat tossing in the distance. There were men in her, but whether dead or alive the Spaniard could not discern.

Coming alongside, the Spanish sailors looked down upon four men huddled together. Their eyes moved. Otherwise they were dead.

During five days and five nights they had been adrift on the winter sea. They had a little biscuit. They had no water. There were the two seaman gunners, the cook and a negro. The Spaniards landed them and they were placed in hospital.

After three months in hospital one of the gunners came home and made his report, which begins: "I was the gun's crew of the *Dauntless,*" and goes on to describe his experiences in the boat in two sentences: "We drifted about in the Bay for five days. We had biscuits but no water."

These four men in the port lifeboat, and the master and the three officers in the jolly-boat survived out of the twenty-three people of the *Dauntless.*

XXXI

Firing on the Boats

Said the third officer to the quartermaster, who was at the wheel, "James"—but that was not his name—"James," said the third officer, "I think there is a submarine on our starboard bow."

The quartermaster's subsequent impressions were extremely crowded. The dusk of the late afternoon was thickening the easterly haze; and, staring across the long, smooth swell, the quartermaster discerned the dark conning-tower and lighter hull of a submarine some two and a half miles away, and the indistinct figures of two officers on the conning-tower, and three or four men grouped on the deck. At the same time he was aware that the third officer was speaking to the captain down the voice-tube. Then a gun spoke on the submarine and a shell went by in the air. The master arrived on the bridge. So did the chief officer. The master turned the engine-room telegraph to stop, blew on the whistle the four short blasts signifying "Abandon ship," and ordered the boats to be

swung out and manned. All these things happened very quickly. The quartermaster having run to his boat, saw a shell burst in the wheelhouse which he had just quitted.

In the meantime the master on the bridge saw the submarine sink and disappear. Watching, he saw her emerge again on the port side. She opened fire again. The master went to his cabin, possibly to fetch his confidential papers. The starboard lifeboat, which was the master's boat, had pulled clear of the ship.

The port lifeboat was being lowered. The submarine continued deliberately to fire. It is one of the clearest cases on record of a German submarine officer continuing to fire upon a ship after she had surrendered and while the crew were getting away the boats. The boatswain and three men were severely wounded by shell splinters. A shell exploded in the fiddley (or deck-house), setting the bunkers on fire. Paraffin oil was pouring from the stricken ship, slowly spreading a viscous surface upon the heaving waters.

The master came on deck to find his own boat gone, and the chief officer's boat waiting for him, blood all about, five men huddled and helpless, splinters flying, and, standing off in the twilight, the sea-wolves at their murderous work.

That night the boatswain died of his wounds and was buried at sea.

It was February 7th, 1917, when the steamship *Saxonian* was attacked, and the crew sent adrift in open boats in the North Atlantic.

(Further south, the port lifeboat of the *Dauntless* was even then drifting with four starving wretches in her.)

The chief officer's boat was picked up the next morning by a patrol vessel. The second officer's boat drifted for three days and three nights, when she was picked up by one of his Majesty's ships. (That was on the 10th, the day after the *Dauntless'* survivors had been rescued by the Spanish fishermen.)

The patrol boat which found the chief officer and his people steamed to the scene of the capture, and there beheld a sullenly undulating field of oil, strewn with floating wreckage, the remains of the *Saxonian.*

XXXII

The Slavers

The story of the *Gravina* is told by one man, a Spaniard, who escaped. He told the story in a Scottish port, nearly three months after the *Gravina* was lost. He came to the port in a British ship, in which he was serving as fireman; and you can conceive the rough figure, with its swarthy and hard features and dark eyes, clad in stained seafaring clothes, telling his adventures with point and freedom. There is indeed in his narrative a certain vividness of detail usually absent in the records of British seamen.

The Spaniard was donkeyman in the steamship *Gravina,* which was bound from a Spanish port to London with a cargo of oranges. It was on that fatal February 7th, 1917, when the *Saxonian* was put down, and the four men of the *Dauntless* were drifting in their boat in the Bay of Biscay, not to mention other calamities. The *Gravina* was less than a hundred miles from the coast of Ireland, pitching and rolling in a rough sea. At about a quarter to eight in the evening the donkeyman was attending to his engine,

when he felt, as he says, a terrific explosion. "Without knowing exactly how I got there," he continues, "I found myself in the water, and just got a glimpse of the ship before she sank. The whole midship part seemed to have been blown out of her. Her funnel and bridges were gone, and she seemed to be in two parts. She sank well inside of a minute." And that was the end of the *Gravina,* torpedoed without warning.

Some of the crew clung to pieces of wreck. Beaten upon by the cold sea, gradually freezing to death, some thus kept afloat for three hours. Then the submarine appeared, and cast life-buoys attached to lines into the water, and so drew fifteen wretched castaways on board, fifteen out of twenty-two of the crew of the *Gravina.* It seems that the submarine waited for three hours, because, owing to the arrival of a British vessel of war, she was obliged to submerge.

The rescued men were sent down the after hatch of the submarine into her torpedo and ammunition store, where they were each served out with a glass of gin. There were the master, two mates, the second engineer, one Norwegian, two men of undefined nationality, and eight Spanish firemen, among whom was the donkeyman.

Says the donkeyman, "The commander and officers of the submarine were delighted with this piece of work, and talked of it as being the finest explosion they had seen by a torpedo."

The donkeyman, conversing with the German sailors, was informed by them of the extraor-

dinary merits of German submarines and of German guns and of everything German. The donkeyman also learned that in addition to the crew of the *Gravina,* there were two British masters, prisoners of war, secluded in the forward part of the vessel.

The seventeen captives were nine days on board the submarine. During the whole of that time, or the greater part of it, they were battened down in the hold. Of the miseries they endured, of the foul atmosphere, the cramped space, the deadly cold (for a submerged submarine takes the temperature of the water), the perpetual menace of death, or, failing death, the terror of a German prison: of all these things, the donkeyman says nothing. He merely records that the captives were fed well, chiefly on tinned commodities. Now and again they heard the firing of the gun on deck.

The German sailors told him that two more steamers and a sailing ship had been sunk, and that another steamer had been attacked, but had beaten off the submarine with gunfire and forced her to submerge.

On the ninth day of their captivity the prisoners were landed at Heligoland, where they were clapped in prison, "where we were kept for three days, and lived on half a pound of bread and turnips."

Thence the party was sent in a patrol steamer to Bremerhaven, "where we were kept in a commandeered restaurant, and then a barracks, and fed on half a pound of bread, turnips and weak coffee."

Thence they were sent by rail to the huge internment camp at Brandenburg. Here the officers were separated from the men. At least nine of the men were neutrals. The British subjects were civilians, owning the rights of the civilians of a belligerent country. But the Germans treated neutrals and civilians alike as slaves.

The men were quartered in a shed. They were inoculated on the day of their arrival. They were put to work. They were made to saw wood and to build roads. They were paid 1m. 2f. a week. "And we still lived on half a pound of bread and turnips."

One of the Spaniards protested against his treatment, and was beaten about the head for his pains.

The donkeyman knew not by what means his repatriation was arranged; but after three weeks' slavery he and the rest of the Spaniards were sent back through Switzerland to Spain. Then he shipped again in a British ship, and so came to Scotland, where he told his history.

What of the British prisoners? From that ghastly slave camp of five or six thousand captives, Russians, French, Japanese and British, arrive now and again sinister reports of the brutality of sentries, of starvation, of the robbing of their parcels of the British, of bullying and maltreatment. It seems, however, that the officers of the *Gravina,* after about a month in purgatory, were moved to another camp.

XXXIII

A Desperate Pass

There were wild weather and wicked doings in the Atlantic on February 7th, 1917; but on the other side of England, in the North Sea, it seemed to the master of the little steamship *Hanna Larsen,* that all was peaceful enough. He had left the Port of London just after midnight on the preceding day, going down with the tide, past the three-decker men-of-war training hulks, and that mariner's mark, the spire of Gravesend church, and round the wide bend past Thameshaven, and so out to the Nore as the sunrise shone ahead, and then he steered north.

The night of the 7th fell hazy and calm, with a smooth sea. At a little after eleven o'clock the master, leaving the second officer on the bridge, went into the chart-room.

He was startled by the sound of a gunshot. As he ran to the bridge three more shells sang about his ears. The master could not detect whence they came. He ordered the engines to be reversed to take the way off the ship; told the second officer to read the patent log; assembled the ship's company on deck, with the exception of the chief engineer, a fireman and a donkeyman who remained below. The boats were swung out ready for lowering. Then nothing

happened. They waited. They waited for a quarter of an hour. The shots might have been fired by a British ship at an enemy unseen by the people of the *Hanna Larsen;* or a British ship might have mistaken her for an enemy; or an enemy submarine might have opened fire, and then taken fright at the approach of a British ship of war and dived. In that indecipherable and mysterious darkness anything was possible.

The master decided to go on. When a ship has been stopped and the crew are expecting in imminent danger to abandon ship, it is always something of a test of discipline to issue orders to carry on.

The men returned to their stations; the engines went slow ahead and then quickened to full speed. A few minutes afterwards another shot came over. It was fired from off the starboard quarter and passed just over the bridge. The master again reversed engines. He sounded three blasts on the whistle, signifying "Abandon ship." Three more shells were fired, striking the boat deck and breaking a steam-pipe, so that the steam poured up on deck. The master ordered the men into the boats and burned his confidential papers in the galley fire.

The unseen enemy continued to fire while the men were embarking in the boats. The second engineer, the steward and two able seamen were wounded.

While the two boats were pulling away from the ship the master saw a submarine, gleaming a faint grey upon the dark, stealing round the

bows of the ship. She bore no flag, nor mark nor number.

The commanding officer of the submarine hailed the boats and ordered them alongside. As the men in the master's boat hung on to the port-side of the submarine, a muffled figure in her conning-tower demanded to be told where was the master. When the master replied, he was ordered on board the submarine, together with four or five hands. The chief officer, two able seamen and the engineer's steward followed the master on board the enemy, a voluntary action on their part worth noting.

Five of the *Hanna Larsen's* crew remained in the boat, and these were joined by several German sailors, bringing bombs on board.

In the meantime the second lifeboat had made fast to the stern of the submarine.

The master told the commanding officer of the submarine that one of the master's crew was badly wounded in the head, whereupon the German officer ordered one of his people to fetch lint and dress the wound.

The master, being behind the conning-tower, did not see what happened next, but the chief engineer, in his boat astern of the submarine, afterwards told the master that the master's boat, partly manned by the five men of the *Hanna Larsen* and partly by Germans, pulled over to the *Hanna Larsen,* into which the Germans climbed. They slung their bombs over the starboard side, searched the ship and took food and clothing and other things, put these in the boat, ignited the fuses of the bombs and pulled

back to the submarine. A little after, flames lit the night, and there were several heavy explosions.

The chief officer, the steward and the two able seamen who had followed the master on board were ordered into their boat. The chief engineer, in the other boat, was ordered on board the submarine. With the master, he was sent below. Then the commanding officer of the submarine ordered the men in the two boats to shove off. They were subsequently landed. The wounded men went to hospital, where one of the able seamen died.

Turn we to the master and the chief engineer, helpless and captive among the strange and evil under-water folk who had robbed them of their ship. They contemplated the stiff, unseaman-like figures, the hard and servile faces moving in that long, rounded cell crammed with mysterious mechanism, going about their murderous business in the dead of night; and a more hopeless situation the two British seamen had never confronted.

Presently a German officer descended. He wanted to know where the master kept his chronometer, sextant and papers, because, he said, a party was going to the *Hanna Larsen* again.

The master subsequently learned that the ship was again plundered, and that she was finally sunk by the explosion of bombs placed inside the hull. (As a matter of fact, she did not sink till the following day.)

The two prisoners slept that night in hammocks on the floor. They slept. But the next

morning the master had no stomach for his breakfast. Empty as he was, he was summoned to the commanding officer, where he sat in sacred isolation in his cabin aft.

The German offered wine to the master, either because he was obviously ailing, or to loosen his tongue, and proceeded to question him as to the position of the British minefield. Getting very little satisfaction on this point, the German told the master that he, the master, and the chief engineer had been taken prisoner, because orders had been issued to capture all masters and chief engineers, so that the supply of officers for the British merchant service should be depleted. The German officer also said that the two prisoners would be taken to Zeebrugge and thence to Ruhleben. He added that he had put down eighteen ships, and would sink thirty before he returned to port. That was what he said. But he was mistaken.

After this encouraging conversation, the master and the chief engineer occupied themselves in deducing what was going forward on deck from what they heard and saw below. They had scarce a dull moment.

The submarine was cruising on the surface. Soundings were taken every twenty minutes. From time to time came the report and the vibration of firing, the men below passing up shells to the gunners on deck. After one of these attacks a German brought down below a sextant, a chronometer and a Norwegian flag, and proudly exhibited these trophies to the prisoners.

The two prisoners, like others in the same

case, saw no alternative in their future between being taken to a German prison camp, and being sunk with the submarine by a British ship of war. And in these waters, off the English coast, it was singularly probable that they would be sent to the bottom without a chance of escape, especially as the German officer in command was so busy and zealous. That morning, for instance, he had begun at eight o'clock with the Norwegian . . . He was still at it.

It was about two hours later when a couple of rounds were fired on deck; and the next moment officers and men came tumbling down below, exhibiting every mark of terror, and the submarine was made hurriedly to dive. The spectacle was far from inspiriting.

The two prisoners fortified themselves with dinner, which was good and plentiful, and awaited the next crisis. It arrived about half-past one.

Firing broke out again on deck. It ceased, and the submarine dived below the surface. Officers and men were clearly in a state of high tension. There was a pause. Then came a formidable explosion, and a tremendous shock jarred the submarine from end to end. The top plating was burst open, and the water poured into the vessel. Now, thought the two prisoners, it has come. This is the end. . . .

The commanding officer issued sharp orders to the men at their stations beside the valves, and the submarine rose swiftly to the surface. The captain, followed by the rest of the officers and the whole of the crew, crowded up the ladders. They left the engines running. They left

the two prisoners below, the water spouting through the buckling plates into the chamber, the vessel heeling over. Outside, shot after shot rang out; the two men below felt the shock of their impact, and pieces of the conning-tower crashed down the hatchway.

The master and the chief engineer decided to die, if die they must, in the open. So up they went, into the clean air and the daylight; and there, ranging up alongside, was a British man-of-war. The master flourished his handkerchief. The Germans, each man's hand uplifted, stood ranked along the heeling deck, like a row of mechanical toys. Two Germans lay prone on the deck, with blood about them. Two were in the water.

The man-of-war was getting a boat away, and, perceiving that the surrender was accepted, one of the Germans went below and stopped the engines.

The master and the chief engineer saw the bluejackets swinging to their oars, saw the officer sitting in the stern-sheets, heard the order "Way enough" as the boat curved round to come alongside.

Then the master hailed. "We are two Britishers, taken prisoners last night," he bellowed.

"Jump in," said the officer, as the boat drew abreast of the tilted deck of the submarine.

As for the commanding officer of the submarine, he was no more seen. He was first on the conning-tower during the attack, and was killed by a shell. So he did not sink thirty ships after all.

XXXIV

Sticking to It

The master of the oil tank-steamship *Pinna,* having been on the bridge for many hours, was taking what he called a cat-nap in the chart-room, lying on the mattressed seat, his head close to the voice-tube communicating with the bridge. Through his sleep there penetrated into his consciousness the vision of a small craft sailing off the starboard beam and firing at something. The master sprang bright awake. It was the chief officer's voice speaking from the bridge, and in a moment the master was standing beside him; and both officers surveyed what appeared to be a fishing boat under sail. And yet it was not quite like a fishing boat. There was something wrong about it—and why should a fishing coble carry a gun?

It was towards seven o'clock of a calm, hazy morning, February 12th, 1917. The *Pinna,* carrying nearly 8,000 tins of refined petroleum, was approaching the south-west coast. If the strange sail was a submarine, with luck and pluck the master might yet win port.

The master ordered the helm to be put over to bring the suspicious sail astern. A gun spoke from the boat, and a shell struck the starboard bulwark abaft the forecastle. The

master, concluding that he had to deal with a submarine, ran to the aft steering-engine and took the wheel.

A shell missed the bridge and hit the mainmast, and a splinter smashed the engine-room telegraph on the bridge, severing communication with the engine-room. A shell struck the poop; another pierced the counter, went through a bulkhead and hit the engine stove.

The master, keeping the submarine astern, perceived that she was overhauling him, and hitting the ship where she liked at short range. He stopped engines and ordered the boats away.

While the men were embarking, the submarine, having ceased fire, slid up abeam on the port side. When the crew on the port side had pulled clear the submarine fired a torpedo, striking the *Pinna* against No. 2 tank, and the crew of the starboard boat, lying alongside the ship, received a disagreeable shock. The master, in the starboard boat, pulled round the stern and joined the port boat, while the *Pinna* slowly listed over to port.

The submarine had disappeared, probably because she had observed the approach of a patrol boat.

The captain of the patrol boat hailed the master of the *Pinna,* offering to pick up the crew. The master, although his ship had been under fire and torpedoed, was perfectly composed and vigilant. He told the captain of the patrol boat to leave himself and the crew in the boats, and suggested that the captain should steam swiftly round and round the *Pinna,* while the master tried to save her.

Then the master called for volunteers. With him, on board the injured ship, went the chief, second and third engineers and a fireman, while the patrol boat circled round her. That manœuvre was some protection; but it was far from complete; and the working party toiling down below in the engine-room risked being torpedoed.

They found enough steam still in the boiler to work the pumps, and began to pump out one of the tanks in order to lighten the ship and so get her on an even keel. After about three-quarters of an hour she was righted.

The captain of the patrol boat arranged to take the *Pinna* in tow; a hawser was carried on board by the people of the *Pinna* and made fast. In the meantime another patrol vessel had come along, and, concluding that all was now well, had gone away.

The crew in the boats of the *Pinna* were getting on board, when the master suddenly perceived the periscope of the submarine. He shouted to the captain of the patrol boat to recall by wireless the second patrol boat. But it was too late. A torpedo struck the ship where the first had struck her.

But the master was undefeated. He stuck to it that the ship would not and should not sink. Nor did she. They worked away at the pumps; more patrol boats came up; the *Pinna* was taken in tow; and that evening, at seven o'clock, just twelve hours after she was torpedoed, she was safely beached.

The *Pinna* was afterwards floated and repaired.

XXXV

A Fishing Trip

You know the steam trawler—the stout, broad-beamed craft with deck-house amidships, and one portly funnel, a large square hatch covering the fish-hold, and a dinghy fixed aft.

The grey-bearded master and his six or eight hands are seasoned, like their vessel, to all weathers; for they fish the North Sea, wet or fine, storm or calm, summer and winter, peace or war.

At midnight of February 5th-6th, 1917, the steam trawler *Adelaide* was some thirty miles from a north-country port. The master was sleeping below, when he was roused out by a deck hand who told him that a submarine was firing at the *Adelaide*. (There used to be an impression that in an abstract theory, called international law, fishing craft were outside warlike operations.)

The master, going on deck, saw a long, grey shape lying on the water in the brilliant moonlight, a little way off on the starboard quarter. The master ordered the boat away. The sub-

marine fired two more shots while the men were lowering the boat. The boat pulled clear. The submarine drew alongside the boat, and the officer on the conning-tower peremptorily ordered the people of the *Adelaide* on board.

The German had no murderous design. He was merely in need of a few little things. He ordered two of the *Adelaide's* crew to return on board with three German sailors. The Germans carried with them the bombs without which they seldom travel. (No doubt in future vessels will be fitted with a rack to hold the bombs of visitors.) On board the *Adelaide* the Germans deposited their explosives in the engine-room, ordered the British seamen to open the condensers, took all the spanners they could find, secured the stock of provisions, stole the flags, ignited the fuses of the bombs and sheered off.

The submarine officer ordered the crew of the *Adelaide* into their boats. "They had just nicely got in," says the master, "when there were three loud explosions on the said ship (the *Adelaide*)." The Germans gave to the master a loaf of bread (his own). One loaf among nine men, each of whom is accustomed to eat a loaf or two loaves at a meal, is small sustenance for a thirty mile pull.

Then the submarine went away. It was about a quarter to four. There is one thing your seaman never in any circumstances forgets. He always notes the time. Torpedoed, under fire, sinking, in the water, as long as he is alive the seaman notes the time, G. M. T. And when he fetches up in Port of Heaven he will

know approximately at what hour and so many minutes his spirit quitted its mortal tenement.

The master steered by the moon till the sun rose, and then he steered by the sun. The crew rowed for eight hours.

The conning-tower of a submarine rose above the surface, and the crew of the *Adelaide* hung on their oars in a deadly suspense. But it was a British officer who emerged on the conning-tower, and a British voice which hailed them to come to breakfast.

This was a lucky trip. The men of the *Adelaide* lost ship and gear. Many of their mates have lost life and limb as well.

XXXVI

Twice Running

The North Atlantic (that arena of disaster), a confused swell, noon of Tuesday, March 6th, 1917. The steamship *Fenay Lodge* heading towards France, a ring of haze, about ten miles in diameter, closing her in.

A torpedo struck her on the starboard side; the master ordered the crew into the boats, and away they went. They pulled for about half an hour, the water breaking over them, when, half-hidden in the mist, the submarine emerged into view and opened fire on the deserted ship. Presently both ship and submarine were lost to sight.

There were twenty-seven persons in the *Fenay Lodge,* all British except one Dutchman and one Russian. In two boats they drifted head to sea in the bitter weather, the rest of that day, Tuesday, and all that night, and the morning of Wednesday. Then, towards noon, they sighted a steamship; pulled towards her, making signals of distress, and were taken on board. She was a French ship, the *Ohio.*

The castaways had scarce shifted into dry clothing and eaten and drunk, when the *Ohio*

was struck by a torpedo. She went down in three minutes. No other details are available.

Half an hour after the people of the *Fenay Lodge* had been picked up they were again adrift. But five of them had been drowned in the sinking of the *Ohio*.

The three boats, containing the survivors of the *Fenay Lodge* and the Frenchmen, drifted head to sea in the bitter weather for the rest of the day. About six in the evening they sighted a steamer. She bore down upon them. She was a British ship, the *Winnebago,* and, stopping alongside the tossing boats, the master offered to take them on board. He was answered by so confused a shouting in French and English that at first he could make nothing of it. But presently he understood that the men were warning him that there were three enemy submarines about, and that they refused to be taken on board.

They were some two hundred miles from land, and they refused to be taken on board. The master of the *Winnebago* had done all he could; if the castaways thought open boats preferable to a stout ship, it was their affair, and he went on.

The men of the *Fenay Lodge* and the men of the *Ohio* drifted head to sea in the bitter weather all that Wednesday night, and all Thursday morning. At three o'clock in the afternoon a patrol boat ran up alongside and took on board twenty-two men of the *Fenay Lodge* and five officers and twenty-seven men of the French ship *Ohio*.

XXXVII

The Fight of the "Aracataca"

The master, on the bridge of the *Aracataca,* did not hear the report of the first gun fired, but the gunner, standing by his gun aft, marked the splash of a projectile falling close by the rudder. Then the master heard a distant detonation. For one moment he could see nothing; the next, a shell dived into the sea on the port bow. Two or three shells struck the ship, and still there was no submarine in sight. The chief steward came running up to the bridge to report that a man whose hand had been blown off, had come to the saloon, and that several other men in the forecastle were dangerously wounded.

The captain knew from the position of the arrival of the projectiles that the submarine was astern. Here was the event for which he had been diligently rehearsing officers and men.

The two gunners aft received the signal to return the fire, as soon as the second shell came over, together with directions as to range, and they went steadily and swiftly to work. At the same time up went the red ensign.

All the ship's officers, except the engineers, came to the bridge. The chief officer took the wheel. The other officers carried messages and acted as requisite.

The section of the crew which had been trained for the purpose, went to their stations, and passed up ammunition.

The wireless operator sent out warnings, but no distress signals, because the master "did not consider himself in distress." Answers were immediately received. From one of his Majesty's ships came a reply saying that she would arrive in half an hour. The two vessels continued to talk to each other during the action.

The gunners of the *Aracataca* exchanged shot for shot with the submarine. As each shell of the enemy came over the master noted the position of the splash, and altered course accordingly.

The firing on both sides was rapid. Amid the regular reports of the guns, the smoke and crash of bursting shells, a rumour ran about the ship, that the ammunition locker had been blown up, and the cool and wary master observed signs of consternation among the crew.

The master went below and spoke to the men, telling them that the *Aracataca* was gaining on the submarine and that help would arrive inside half an hour. The men turned to at once. Such is the value of leadership.

Coming on deck, the master called together the deck hands, rallied them with a few hearty words, and asked them to take on any duty that might be required of them. The men responded

with a will. Some of the seamen went below to do the work of those firemen and trimmers who had been injured.

The gunners, one of whom was the carpenter, a volunteer, were sticking to their gun, and although the submarine manœuvred to place herself dead in the rays of the sun, the *Aracataca* gunners made very good shooting, perceptibly bewildering the submarine.

The action hotly continued, in a brisk breeze, a choppy and sunlit sea, the big ship swiftly manœuvring, belching fire from her stern gun, beside which the carpenter stood exposed during the fight, the conning-tower of the submarine, astern of the steamship, gliding steadily onwards, now wreathed in smoke, now glittering in the sun.

And all the time the chief steward, below, was doing the grisly work of a surgeon. The wounded men were brought from the forecastle and laid on the table of the saloon. With his mates, the chief steward improvised dressings and tourniquets. When he had done he reported to the master, (1) that the cases were very serious, (2) that his stock of medical appliances was very limited, (3) that he had stopped all bleeding.

One man, a fireman, lay dead in the forecastle. He had been killed instantaneously. His body was taken from the forecastle and laid in a place by itself. Thus all was done decently and in order.

The action began at one o'clock. At some time during the first half-hour a shell pierced the funnel, entered the deck-house and burst in

the galley, and another shell sang between the master and the chief officer and smashed the fore part of the bridge on which they were standing, and, bursting, scattered shrapnel.

But presently the fire of the enemy became less frequent and the shells went wide. The submarine was receiving better than she sent. At the end of three-quarters of an hour, the master, watching the fall of the shells from the *Aracataca's* gun, saw the conning-tower vanish in a smother of smoke and spray. When it blew away the submarine was lying motionless athwart her course, and her gun was silent. The *Aracataca* had beaten her.

Four minutes later a British vessel of war hove in sight, and promptly steered to place herself between the submarine and the steamship.

But the submarine was done. The *Aracataca* saw her no more, and came safely into port. The master reported that the crew behaved to the master's "entire satisfaction," and especially commended the services of the chief steward, who saved the lives of the wounded men, and whose amateur surgery was so good that the doctors who treated the men in port affirmed that it was as well done "as any man could do it." The master also especially commended the two gunners, of whom one was the carpenter, "the latter taking a prominent position at the gun throughout the whole action in a most exposed position, being entirely voluntary."

As for the master himself, his skilled organisation, composure, resource and courage won

him one of the most notable fights of the British merchant service. It was fought on March 10th, 1917.

The German beast of prey was outfought and outmanœuvred from the beginning, although he struck first and murderously. The master of the *Aracataca* had defeated the submarine ere the ship of war arrived.

XXXVIII

The Blackguard

The events of March 27th, 1917, are, like the night that covered them, darkly clear, with here and there significant and daunting glimpses opening between great spaces of blackness and again obscured. And those glimpses are the reflection of a reflection in the mind's mirror of two men.

One was the gunner of the steamship *Thracia,* a private of the Royal Marines. The time was between eight and nine o'clock at night; the ship was in the Channel, bound to a home port; the gunner was on duty, stationed at his gun on the poop. He heard a sharp detonation, which (he said) sounded like the crack of a pistol fired somewhere forward. A column of water mingled with black smoke shot up forward of the bridge to starboard. Four short blasts sounded on the syren, signifying "Abandon ship." The gunner ran forward, mingling with a crowd of hurrying figures in the dark, felt the ship sinking downwards towards the bows beneath his feet as he ran, and understood that she would go down ere the boats could be lowered. He turned and ran back to the gun to fetch his lifebelt, slung it on, climbed on the rail to dive, "and before he knew exactly what had hap-

pened he found himself in the sea.'' Events, as they do on these occasions, succeeded one another more swiftly than consciousness could register.

The gunner was drawn deep down in the icy water, came up again, and struck out, shouting for help with all his strength. He swam and shouted during what, with a seaman's particularity, he estimated to be a period of twenty minutes, rising and falling with the lop of sea, fighting for his life, and then there came answering calls, a boat loomed above him, and he was hauled on board. She had been lowered from a neutral steamer, which afterwards landed the sturdy Marine at an English port. He thought at first he was the sole survivor of the *Thracia.*

When the gunner on deck heard a detonation like the report of a pistol, the acting fourth officer, a boy of fifteen, who was just getting into his bunk below, felt a shock as of ''a small explosion about the main bunker.'' As he ran up on deck in his shirt, the syren blew the signal ''Abandon ship.'' The next thing the boy knew, he was being drawn down with the sinking vessel.

Struggling to the surface, he saw a capsized boat, swam to it, and found it was part of the starboard lifeboat, of which the stern had been blown off. The fourth officer climbed in the boat and lashed himself to it. Other men swam to the boat and hung on. The fourth officer counted seven. He made out that two among them were badly hurt. The other men could

give them no help, and the two wounded men were washed away and drowned. The rest hung on for a while. Then the black hulk of a steamer loomed about a mile distant, and three of the men resolved to swim to her. They dropped off and started. Five minutes afterwards the steamer vanished. The three men were never seen again.

At this point, the fourth officer, drenched by the sea and stabbed by the sword of the frozen wind, became partially unconscious. When he revived a little the two remaining men of the seven were gone.

What woke the lad to some perception was the sound of a voice, calling in English. He saw a long, dark shape heaving to leeward, and understood that it was a German submarine, and that a German officer was asking him questions.

The German asked what ship he had sunk, whence she came, whither she was bound, and what was her cargo. The fourth officer gave the information.

"Are you an Englishman?" asked the German officer.

The boy replied that he was.

"Then," said the German, "I shall shoot you."

"Shoot away," said the fourth officer.

So disrespectful an answer naturally hurt the sensitive German.

"I shall not waste powder on a pig of an Englishman," was the German officer's majestic retort.

At this point, the German seems to have permitted a just indignation to overcome his natural delicacy of feeling.

"Drown, you swine, drown!" he shouted, and sheered off.

The officer of his Imperial Majesty's Navy in command of the submarine left the child adrift on his bit of wreckage. There the boy drifted, lashed, helpless and to all appearance dead, all that night. The sun rose on that spectacle in the bitter March morning, and still the boy tossed and tumbled in the breaking sea.

There, at half-past ten (the fourth officer of course marks the time, though he was very nearly dead), a fishing boat espied the castaway, bore down and took him on board. He had been more than thirteen hours in the water.

Of thirty-eight persons, these two were saved: the gunner and the acting fourth officer, aged fifteen and a half years.

The sea, as we know, is blind and pitiless; but the sea spared the lad who defied the German. If that chivalrous officer still defiles the sea, or befouls the land, he may reflect that he was silly to give way to temper, after all; because if there was one thing which would make that boy resolve to live, it was the German's order that he should drown. The German officer should have shot the fourth officer, as the child suggested, instead of being piqued and haughtily refusing that simple request. He seems to have lacked a sense of humour. "We are a serious nation," a German naval officer once said to the present writer.

XXXIX

Settling the Score

When the master of the *Palm Branch* had his first dispute with the enemy, his ship was an unarmed target, and so he must trust to his skill in retreat. In the second affair it was not so.

On November 21st, 1916, in grey autumn weather, the *Palm Branch* was off the coast of France. At a little before two o'clock in the afternoon, the master, who was on the bridge, saw the conning-tower of a submarine rise out of the sea within forty yards of his port quarter. As soon as the submarine was awash, men swiftly put together a gun aft of the conning-tower.

It was an emergency for which the master had been looking for two years. While the Germans were fitting the gun, the master of the *Palm Branch* put his helm over to get the submarine right astern, and ordered full speed ahead. The chief engineer himself went down to the stokehold to encourage the firemen during the trouble.

It began five minutes after the submarine had emerged. She opened fire. The first few

shells missed the ship. Then they began to hit her. The submarine, manœuvring to get a broadside aim, was continually defeated in her design by the master of the *Palm Branch,* who swung his ship to keep the enemy astern. The submarine continued to fire with explosive and shrapnel shells.

The rest of the officers were each at the instant disposal of the master. Beside him the apprentice was at the wheel.

Under that steady fire at short range the stern of the ship was damaged, and the quarters of the crew aft were knocked to pieces; the port lifeboat was shot away; the starboard lifeboat had a hole through it. The bridge was hit and a seaman was wounded. At the same time the apprentice was struck on the head by a splinter. He stuck to the wheel, blood running down his face.

Shells entered the forecastle, wrecked the men's bunks, and a fire broke out. The chief officer instantly called a working party to extinguish the fire, and checked the alarm of the deck hands, who heartily responded to his appeal.

After half an hour of this work, the submarine, which had been kept right astern of the *Palm Branch,* and which did not pursue her, ceased fire and went away to attack a fleet of fishing boats, easier game.

Thus did the master save a valuable ship for his King and country. The *Palm Branch* ran into a French port to repair damages.

Thence she proceeded upon her voyage; and

upon her arrival in an American port, aroused some little excitement in America, because here was a ship which had been under fire and which had escaped.

The master of the *Palm Branch* continued upon his lawful occasions, and a paternal Government gave him a gun to play with.

Some five months after his encounter with the German, the master of the *Palm Branch* brought her into the White Sea. The afternoon of May 4th, 1917, fell fine, with a light breeze and a smooth sea. At a little before four o'clock, the master on the bridge saw the periscope of a submarine rise above the glassy surface about a quarter of a mile from the ship, on the port beam.

The gunner, stationed aft at his gun, saw the track of a torpedo whitening towards the ship. The torpedo passed astern of the *Palm Branch,* missing her by about eight feet.

At the same time the conning-tower of the submarine began to rise, and the gunner of the *Palm Branch* fired. The shell struck the conning-tower. The gunner's second shot pierced the hull of the submarine, which sank.

As she sank, a shell fired at long range came over the *Palm Branch.* It came from a second submarine. The master ordered full speed and steered a zig-zag course, while the two gunners kept a steady fire upon the submarine.

All the crew were at their stations; the officers were at the disposal of the master; his organisation worked perfectly. So accurate was the shooting of the *Palm Branch* that the sub-

marine dropped further astern, lengthening the range from 4,000 to 7,500 yards. She was firing continuously from two guns.

Bewildered and hampered by the fire of the *Palm Branch,* the submarine fired about eighty rounds in the space of something under an hour; she did not touch the *Palm Branch* once.

Presently the gunner of the *Palm Branch* placed a shell on the after gun of the submarine, knocking it to pieces. Then some British trawlers appeared, steaming at full speed and converging on the submarine. The submarine ceased fire. She was done, fairly beaten by gun fire; and the last the *Palm Branch* saw of her, she was lying like a log on the water. So the master of the *Palm Branch* was quits with the enemy.

The Admiralty stated that they considered his achievement due to the excellent discipline and preparation for defence which he habitually maintained in the *Palm Branch.*

XL

The Raft

The story of the *Serapis* is a short story, because, like many another of these cruel records, it includes spaces of time concerning whose events no more than a suggestion is practicable. Men who for days and nights have been burning and freezing in open boats, sick with hunger and tormented by thirst, seldom describe their sensations. They happily forget them, or they are brought to so low a level of consciousness that all is merged in dull suffering; or, for the sake of their own peace of mind, they refuse to peer into the glass of memory. . . .

The *Serapis* had brought the crew of a torpedoed ship into port, so that when she sailed again every man on board owned a vivid notion of what might happen to himself. But it did not occur to anyone to desert on that account.

The *Serapis* was one day out. At about six o'clock on Tuesday, June 26th, 1917, when she was midmost of the Irish Sea, a torpedo struck her on the starboard side and exploded between the engine-room and the hold. Instantly she heeled over on her beam ends, and the men

who had rushed to get away the port lifeboat were flung into the water. Then the *Serapis* sank bodily. A minute elapsed between the explosion of the torpedo and the total disappearance of the ship.

The long swell was strewn with swimming men and wreckage, men clinging to planks and pieces of the ship, men drowning, broken fragments which had been men, and men dead.

Then uprose from the depths the German submarine, and her commanding officer surveyed his work from the conning-tower, and found it to his mind. He hailed the drowning men, demanding the captain and the chief officer; and when these had replied, he brought the submarine alongside the captain and ordered his men to haul him on board. He sent the captain below, picked up the chief officer, and sent him below also.

Then the German officer went away and left all the rest of the people of the *Serapis* to drown.

A steamer was visible on the horizon, and the submarine steered towards her.

The second officer beheld all these things, and perceived that the command now devolved upon himself. He set about to save life. Swimming on his plank, he collected more pieces of wreckage, and with pieces of rigging made shift to bind them together into a raft. Four men besides himself huddled on the raft. A little way off three men were sitting on another assemblage of wreckwood, and the two rafts drifted slowly away in company. They left a few of

the crew clinging to spar and locker. The rest had gone down.

All that night the second officer and the four men drifted on the swell. Here is one of those spaces of time of which the record is a sinister blank. Let who will imagine the plight of men insecurely riding a bulk of sodden timber in mid-sea, continually beaten upon by the breaking water, through the infinitely long hours of the night.

When the sun rose its first rays gleamed upon the second officer's raft, alone.

The raft capsized, throwing the five castaways into the water. Paralysed by the cold of the night, three men sank and were drowned. The second officer and one man climbed desperately back upon the raft.

As the sun rose higher the seaman began to babble and to shout, his voice continuing amid the vast silence of the sea in the high monotone of the delirious. By degrees he fell to moaning. Presently he was silent. The second officer was now alone with the dead man.

And here is another blank space of time.

Whether or not the second officer perceived the submarine approaching him he does not record. All he says is that at three o'clock in the afternoon he was picked up by a British submarine.

XLI

The Flying Death

On May 20th, 1917, a thick haze covered the waters off the East Coast, and a steamship lay at anchor waiting for light. At a little after one the fog lifted, and hung like a filmy roof over the sea. The master of the *Birchgrove* weighed anchor and went on his way.

He heard the drone of aircraft engines; and presently sighted two aeroplanes flying fast and low, sweeping out of the haze directly towards his ship.

The next moment there came the chatter of machine-guns, and bullets spattered about the bridge. The master saw a strange dark object flying downwards, and an aerial torpedo plunged into the sea alongside and dived under the ship without touching her. The master put the helm over, and so swiftly altered course. He was just in time, for a second torpedo, fired at 200 yards, passed within ten feet of the stern.

The master marked the black crosses painted on the underside of the planes, ran up the red ensign, ordered the crew below, ordered the gun's crew to open fire. The two seaplanes had

continued machine-gun fire from the first shot, and the bullets continued to whistle all about the bridge.

The pilot remained on the bridge with the master, the two gunners served their gun astern. No one else was on deck. Below, the firemen were shovelling coal for their lives.

The master, staring upwards, saw the great birds gliding above, each ridden by a hooded figure, each spurting flame.

The gunner of the *Birchgrove,* cool and unhurried, trained his gun with care. At his first shot the two seaplanes turned about, and rising, steered eastward, whence they had come. The gunner of the *Birchgrove* fired again and again, his third shot either hitting the enemy or going just over him. Another shot, and the two seaplanes were out of sight, and in a little while the drone of their flight died away.

The discipline and organisation of the master and the steady marksmanship of the gunners saved the *Birchgrove.* They also saved three defenceless foreign vessels which were steaming within range of the seaplanes.

XLII

Brethren of the Shark

Very early on Sunday morning, July 15th, 1917, the steamship *Mariston,* homeward bound in the North Atlantic, was within about a hundred miles of land. The evidence of the manner of her loss and the sequel is the deposition of the only survivor, who was the cook.

When the torpedo struck the ship the cook was asleep in his bunk, in the house on the main deck. He was awakened by being hurled upwards against the ceiling, with the crash of an explosion in his ears. The mess-room steward, who was asleep in the bunk below the cook, continued to slumber, nor did he wake when the cook shook him. Already the water was surging about the cook's ankles, and dripping through the seams of the deck above; and the cook ran out upon the main deck, which was awash. He seems to remember seeing the apprentice following him as he doubled to the midship cabin to rouse the steward. He never reached the steward, because a second explosion, catching him on the way, blew the midship

Amid the tumult, the black smoke and the cabin to pieces.

pieces of the ship falling about his ears, the cook, as he ran aft, was aware of the chief gunner. The ship was sinking rapidly; the main deck was level with the breaking sea, and the cook caught up a hatch and plunged overboard, followed by the chief gunner. Both men clung to the hatch; the ship went down bodily, stern first; and there came a mighty rush of water. When it had passed the cook was alone on his hatch. He never saw the gunner again.

In the colourless light of an overcast sunrise the cook beheld the long, confused rollers strewn with wreckage, and counted seventeen men clinging to the pieces of the ship.

Then up from the troubled waters projected two periscopes, like two horns, then the two conning-towers of the submarine, and then her long hull, shiny and black as coal, hove dripping upon the swell. To the cook she loomed as great as the five-thousand-ton ship she had just sent to the bottom. All along her side, revealed in curves of the moving sea, waved festoons of green weed and slimy barnacles. She carried a gun forward and a gun aft.

The hatch on the conning-tower lifted, and there emerged a German officer. The men in the water were crying and shouting for help. The German officer surveyed the field of destruction through his glasses. Presently he dropped them, leisurely disappeared down the hatch, which shut, and the submarine began to sink. She settled steadily down, amid the cries of rage of the drowning men, until the periscopes alone were visible. Then they glided

away, cutting through the seas, each square, hooded pole flirting a feather of foam. . . .

The cook, tossing on his little raft, kept counting the men in sight; and every time he counted he made the total less. Then he heard a man scream, and saw him throw up his hands; and he saw the black fin of a shark cleaving the lop of sea, and the flash of white as the great fish turned over to snatch its prey. The cook saw (he says) "a crowd of sharks," and heard man after man screaming as he was dragged under.

That is all he says. It is perhaps adequate. A theory may here be hazarded that the sharks follow the submarines. . . . They could make their profit of the voyage.

As the sun rose, the wind and the sea went down on that desolation; and still the cook tossed on his hatch, until he was the last alive. He thinks it was about ten o'clock when he found himself utterly alone, except for the sharks. By that time he had been some six hours in the water.

At about five o'clock that evening, the master of a British steamship sighted a space of sea dotted all over with drifting wreckage. He steered towards it, and passed through a field of floating timbers and fittings and packing-cases; and on its further fringe he espied the figure of a man floating on a hatch.

It was half-past six when the cook was hauled into the steamer's boat and brought aboard, and revived and comforted. So he lived to tell his tale, alone of all the people in the *Mariston*.

XLIII

The Case of the "Belgian Prince"

Forty-three seamen of the steamship *Belgian Prince* were crowded on the deck of a German submarine, in the steely twilight of a summer night, and one, the master, was below, a prisoner. The submarine was running awash. Astern, the abandoned ship loomed momently more dim. In the minds of every one of those forty-three seamen there dwelt a terrible apprehension.

The attack on the *Belgian Prince* followed the usual routine. She was struck, without warning, by a torpedo. It was then about eight o'clock on the evening of July 31st, 1917, and the ship was two hundred miles from the north coast of Ireland. The master called away the boats, and the crew embarked, leaving the master on board to clear up his affairs. The port lifeboat put back and took him off. The German submarine emerged and opened fire from her machine-gun upon the ship's aerials, which she destroyed. Then the commanding officer of the submarine ordered the two boats alongside, took the master on board, and sent him

below, ordering all the crew on board. They were received with furious abuse by the Germans, who searched their captives, taking from them all their possessions. Money and other articles of value the pirates pocketed; other things they hove overboard. In the meantime a working party took everything out of the boats. The compasses and provisions were put into the submarine. Oars, gratings, bailers and all loose gear were thrown overboard. The two lifeboats were damaged by axes. The plugs were removed, and they were left to sink. The master's dinghy was retained. Several Germans pulled her over to the ship, in which they remained.

These things the crew of the *Belgian Prince* beheld, contemplating, while they were being violently robbed, the destruction of their last hope of escape.

The commanding officer of the submarine, a fair, bearded man of thirty-five or so, ordered the seamen to take off their lifebelts and place them on the deck. Then he strode along the deck, among the men, whom he cursed, kicking the lifebelts overboard. But four men at least contrived to hide their lifebelts under their coats.

From the *Belgian Prince,* in which were the Germans who had gone to her in the dinghy, a signal flashed. The submarine got under way; the captives, as already described, were crowded on her deck, as her engines slowly ground her through the water. So, for about half an hour.

Then there came another signal flashed from

the place where the ship lay shrouded in the thickening dark. Instantly the German officer on the conning-tower disappeared, and the steel hatch clanged to over his head.

The submarine began to sink.

The doubt haunting the forty-three seamen suddenly took shape in a certainty, the certainty of death. The water lipped upon the deck, the water covered their feet. Then they leaped into the sea.

The chief engineer, the cook, a Russian seaman and the little apprentice, who had contrived to keep their lifebelts, struck out for the distant ship. The little apprentice held on to the chief engineer. The cook and the Russian were separated from the chief engineer and the apprentice, and from each other, though all were steering for where they thought the ship lay. The thirty-nine men they left were never seen again.

The chief engineer, holding up the apprentice, swam steadily on, resting at intervals. The boy grew heavier and heavier, his strokes weaker and weaker, and by the time the grey dawn lightened the desolate sea, he was unconscious. The ice-cold water killed him. The chief engineer went on alone.

He saw the *Belgian Prince,* listing over to port, when, as he reckoned, he was still a mile and a half away from her. It was then about half-past five on the morning of August 1st, 1917. The chief engineer saw a bright flame leap from the after part of the ship, saw her go down stern first.

The chief engineer, who makes no remark concerning his emotions at that moment, continued to swim; and presently he saw smoke on the horizon, and swam desperately towards it. A little after, he was picked up by a patrol boat.

The cook, following his own course, also came in sight of the *Belgian Prince* about the same time as the chief engineer sighted her. He also saw the ship sink; and then he perceived the submarine, and swam away. He was picked up by the patrol boat.

The Russian seaman swam faster than the other two men, and actually reached the *Belgian Prince* at about five o'clock, after about eight hours in the water. For the moment, at least, he was saved; but he was still haunted by a doubt. Numbed and exhausted, he struggled on board, shifted into dry clothing, and ate and drank. And then he saw the submarine again. She was coming alongside.

The Russian ran aft, and hiding himself, watched the submarine stop and lie alongside, saw three or four Germans climb on board. There was nothing else for it—the Russian lowered himself into the water again, and hung on beside the rudder. For all he knew the Germans might be about sinking the ship.

But for the moment they were looting her, passing stores, clothing and provisions into the submarine. The Russian watched them for about twenty minutes. Then the submarine stood off and fired two shells into the ship. She broke in two and sank. The submarine dived and so departed.

The Russian, fighting for his life in the swirl of water and driving wreckage, saw the master's dinghy, which had been left adrift by the submarine. He swam to it, climbed in, and lay there until the patrol boat picked him up.

There were forty-four people in the *Belgian Prince*. The crew numbered forty-two, including the master, and there were two negro stowaways. The master was taken prisoner; three were saved because they outwitted the German murderers; forty were drowned. Deprived of their boats, robbed of their possessions, stripped of their lifebelts, they were mustered on board the German submarine and drawn down to certain death.

Then the commanding officer of the submarine having, as he thought, slain all witnesses of his crimes, returned to plunder his prey, the deserted ship. He did not know the sturdy Russian seaman was watching him from behind the rudder. Or that two more witnesses were within gunshot.

Whether he knew it or not, that submarine officer achieved the lowest deep of iniquity until then touched even by Germans on the sea. There may, of course, be worse to come; the civilised nations are hardly competent to estimate the possibilities; but, even now, the Germans at sea have done that which shall not be forgotten till the sea runs dry.

XLIV

Expectation and Event

To voyage at night in submarine-haunted waters is to snatch every minute from fate. For the submarine at night approaches unseen, delivers the blow in the dark, and vanishes unseen. Therefore to all on board the venturing ship the thing may happen at any moment; also it may not; and so they live from moment to moment; watching the grains slip through the hour-glass and wondering when the invisible hand will turn the glass upside down. Such, in fact, is the state of suspense of their under consciousness. But their active intelligence is employed about the work of the ship, which is incessant, and which brings fatigue which brings sleep.

There are, of course, the forces which man always marshals against the unknown. There is fatalism, the theory that no man dies before his time, and that when his time comes, die he will. And what is perhaps more common, the old defiant stoicism of the seaman. But underneath is always the cruel suspense. It is mastered, but it is there.

The lookout man on the forecastle and aloft in the crow's-nest; the helmsman, spinning his

wheel, his eyes on the compass-dial; the officers on the bridge, scanning the field of water, peering into the dark, and aware of the whole living organism of the ship beating like a heart beneath their feet; the men in the engine-room, tending the smooth, swift and obedient machinery; the men in the stokehold, amid the steady roar of the furnaces, heaving coal into the flaming caverns; the deck hands, each man silent at his post; the gunners, standing by their gun aft; each and all know their hazard.

But of all men on board the master wars with the most formidable adversary, for all depend on him. He dare not relax for a moment. Should the crash come, it is the master who must give the instant orders, and the slightest hesitation or the least mistake will lose the lives of men. He has rehearsed in his mind every contingency over and over again; he has trained and practised crew and passengers; there is no more to be done than to wait. And in waiting, he cannot afford to sleep; and yet he cannot afford not to sleep. Many a master is six days and nights on the bridge with intervals of an hour or two hours.

If his ship carries troops, the master knows at least that in case of emergency he can rely upon their conduct. He also knows, if that is any solace to him, that once on board a ship, a soldier divests himself of care. Once he crosses the rail, the seaman takes charge of him. His mind is at ease. Whatever happens, he is not responsible. He has but to obey orders.

So, on the night of 2nd-3rd June, 1917, the

troops sailing in the steamship *Cameronian* went to their hammocks with much of the composure of the Government mules stalled on the decks beneath, which they had just fed and watered and tucked up for the night. But the mules did not know that for them there was no chance of escape.

The soldiers went to sleep, and the seamen watched. Some forty soldiers passed from sleep to death in a flood of water filling the troop-deck in an instant. The torpedo struck the ship at half-past three in the morning.

When a vessel is prepared, the chance of saving life varies according to the time she takes to sink. Therefore the master arranges his organisation to work in the shortest period in which all (or nearly all) can be saved, which is about five minutes. The *Cameronian* sank in five minutes.

The first difficulty is to stop the ship so that the boats may be the more safely lowered. The momentum of a vessel of some 6,000 tons cannot be checked in a moment. The master of the *Cameronian* stopped the engines instantly, but as the ship began rapidly to sink by the stern, the boats must be manned immediately. The crew ran to their boat stations, while the bugles called and the soldiers, those who escaped from the inundation below, came tumbling up, to fall in under the officers' orders with the precision of parade. The ship was still sliding forward, the decks tilting up from the stern to the bows. The five boats were orderly filled and three were lowered to the calm sea. But ere the two

remaining boats touched the water, the ship went down, capsizing the boats. As she sank, the men leaped from the boats into the water.

The exact sequence of events is here obscure, but from the little evidence available, it is clear that the men in the other three boats, coming to the rescue of the men in the water, discovered that there were men pinned down beneath the capsized boats. Before these heavy sea-boats could be righted the men beneath them would drown. The rescuers, with admirable resource, promptly smashed in the planks of the capsized boats, presumably using the looms of their oars, and hauled three men through the aperture. Many a man has been trapped beneath a capsized boat; it must be seldom, indeed, that a way of escape has been suddenly burst through the bottom of the boat.

The people of the *Cameronian,* in the dawn of a summer morning, were now adrift upon the Mediterranean, some fifty miles from Malta. The expected had happened; the suspense was over; the sands in the hour-glass were again trickling steadily. It was fair weather and there was no immediate apprehension. But the master of the *Cameronian,* to whose vigilance and foresight the survivors owed their lives, was drowned; and drowned were the chief engineer, eight men, and the two gunners of the *Cameronian,* together with the soldiers who had been asleep on the troop deck; eighty-three in all.

The boats were picked up by his Majesty's ships and all on board were safely landed.

XLV

Quick Eye and Ready Hand

On May 9th, 1917, the steamship *Malda* was in the North Sea. It was one of those grey spring days, when the smooth sea and the still sky are suffused with an uniform light. The master, the chief officer, the second officer, who was on watch, and the pilot were on the bridge; men were posted to look out in the crow's-nest on the foremast, on the top of the chart house, on the upper bridge, and beside the gun aft.

Among these was a cadet, and he alone sighted the track of a torpedo ruffling the water about three points abaft the port beam and travelling directly towards the ship. The cadet hailed the officer of the watch, who on the word put the helm hard a-port, at the same instant ringing the engine-room telegraph to full speed.

Then all the watchers, eagerly staring, saw the torpedo glimmer past the ship close under the stern.

The ship was saved.

The master sent out wireless messages, in reply to which an escort was sent, and the next day the *Malda* arrived in port.

XLVI

Panic

When the torpedo struck the steamship *Locksley Hall,* she was between thirty and forty miles from Malta, steaming at about nine knots. The second officer, who was on watch, sighted the track of a torpedo about 500 yards away from the ship on the starboard side. He put the helm over instantly; but it was at an unlucky moment; for the vessel was changing from one zig-zag course to another, and ere she could fully answer the alteration in the helm, the torpedo exploded in the engine-room.

The fourth engineer and five of the engine-room crew were killed; the engines were shattered; the after deck was flooded and a huge column of water mixed with wreckage rose high into the air, the starboard lifeboat being lifted some fifty feet.

There were fifty-one natives in the crew of sixty-two. Instantly after the explosion a mob of natives swarmed upon deck and into the boats, without stopping to pick up lifebelts. The master and the officers ordered them out of the boats, and they refused to budge. As

the way was slowing-off the vessel, the master and the officers themselves lowered the boats, crammed with the dark men, the whites of whose eyes showed like the eyes of terrified animals.

The master, cool and composed, sent the second engineer, the third officer and the chief gunner one after the other to see that all had come up from the engine-room; and, having satisfied himself on that point, ordered all remaining on board into the boats.

He stayed on board, as he thought, alone. Having attended to the destruction of his confidential papers and to other details, the master found that in the wreck and confusion some of the native crew had taken refuge in the port dinghy, which was still hanging to the davits. The chief steward was faithfully standing by the boat. The master ordered him into it, and after some persuasion, induced one of the natives to leave the boat and to take one of the falls. The master took the other, when the debilitated native let go. Those in the boat cut the falls just in time to prevent her from capsizing.

The master, the last to leave the ship, got into the dinghy. By that time the after deck of the sinking vessel was nearly level with the water.

The master pulled across to the other two boats, and gave to them certain instructions.

It was then about a quarter past one, half an hour since the ship had been torpedoed. A few minutes later the submarine leisurely emerged about half a mile away, and fired five

rounds into the *Locksley Hall.* The submarine then drew near to the boats, and her commanding officer demanded the person of the master. But being unable to discover him, the German requested the usual information concerning ship and cargo, and then diverted himself by taking photographs of his victims. When he had quite finished, he drew away towards the *Locksley Hall,* fired four more shots into her, and then departed.

The boats remained where they were, the crew watching their ship settling down. Presently she thrust her bows perpendicularly into the air and so sank.

The boats were picked up next day.

XLVII

Nine Steadfast Men

In the steamship *City of Corinth* every officer and man on deck was keeping a look-out. She had come all the way from Japan, and now, at a little after five o'clock on the afternoon of May 21st, 1917, the ship was off the Lizard, in sight of home.

The haze of a spring twilight hung in the windless air, so that the ship, steaming at thirteen knots, moved in a clear circle of about six miles' diameter, across a smooth sea; and if the lines of vision were palpable, they would be seen radiating like the spokes of a wheel from the eyes of the gazing men on deck, incessantly travelling upon the shining field of sea. But nothing married its silken levels.

The chief officer on the bridge felt a shock and heard a thud. The blow so long pending had been struck. The master, who was at the foot of the ladder, sprang up it to the bridge and rang full speed astern, to take off the way of the ship. Then he ordered the wireless operator to send out a message giving the ship's position.

At the same moment the chief engineer below saw the water pouring from the tunnel, the long steel passage in which the propeller shaft revolves. He turned on the men to force the tunnel door shut and to get the pumps going. The third engineer went to the gun mounted aft.

The ship listed to port, settled down a little aft, and then hung where she was.

But while the officers and the white men among the crew were swiftly doing their duty, the Lascars and Chinese scrambled headlong into the boats and lowered them. Within two or three minutes of the explosion one boat got away. The chief officer, standing by the rail, shouting his orders (with what emphasis may be imagined) induced the men in the other three boats to hold on alongside.

The second and third engineers, who were both sick men, were lowered into the boats.

The master, at his post on the bridge, swiftly surveyed the situation, and decided, in spite of the desertion of the native and Chinese crew, to try to make the land. For aught he knew, there was no one left in the engine-room. He rang the telegraph, and receiving an instant reply from the chief engineer, ordered full speed ahead, and steered for the land inside the Lizard. With a powerful head of steam the ship began to move; and at the same time the wireless operator received messages saying that help was on its way.

The third engineer, having left the gun and gone below to fetch some clothes, found the water flooding the engine-room, and was dis-

patched by the chief engineer to report the position to the master.

Baffled in his seamanlike attempt to make the shore, the master rang down to the engine-room, stop, then, finished with engines, and sent the second officer to make sure that all below came on deck.

The chief engineer was instructed to get into one of the boats. In the meantime, the ship was settling down. When the after deck was within a foot of the water, the master ordered the boats to pull away from the vessel for two or three hundred yards and there to remain.

There were thus left on board the sinking ship: the master, who was on the bridge, the chief officer, ranging the decks, the wireless operator, sticking by his instrument, and standing by the gun, the two gunners, three engineers and the carpenter.

These officers and men were taking a double risk. The ship might go down under them as she was, or she might be sunk by a second torpedo, which might also kill or wound those on board.

But a patrol boat was in sight; there was still a chance, if the submarine emerged, of hitting her with a shot from the ship's gun; and there was even a vanishing chance of saving the ship.

So the master, the chief officer, the wireless operator, the two gunners, the three engineers, and the carpenter, nine steadfast men, stayed by their ship. They saw, a long way off, another steamer, which appeared to be in distress.

The next thing was that the chief engineer in the boat, which was hanging off and on not far from the ship, heard the gasp and hiss of compressed air escaping, and recognised the sound of the firing of a torpedo under water close beneath him.

At the same moment, the watchers in the ship saw a periscope and fired at it; and as they fired, the second torpedo struck the ship in the engine-room, exploding with tremendous violence.

The men in the ship, dazed by the shock and with water and wreckage falling all about them, felt the deck under their feet going down and down. The master, cool and unhurried, hailed the boat nearest to the ship to come alongside, and hove overboard his confidential papers.

The nine men slid into the boat, which backed hard off, and cleared the ship. She turned over and sank by the stern.

The people in the boats saw a number of patrol boats gathering about the distant ship which had appeared to be sinking, and then the patrol boat which had been first sighted came up and took them into port.

XLVIII

Carnage

At a little after six o'clock on the morning of May 26th, 1917, a submarine opened fire at long range upon the steamship *Umaria.*

The master instantly ordered fire to be opened in reply. The gunner of the *Umaria* had fired five rounds when the striker of the gun broke, and the gun was made useless. Then the master employed smoke-boxes, as his last resource, in the hope of obscuring the aim of the enemy; but nevertheless his shells fell fast and deadly.

One shell killed a native and wounded several firemen and two cadets. Another smashed a lifeboat, and with it a native who had fled into it for refuge. A splinter broke the thigh of the fourth engineer. The steering gear was struck, and the ship went out of control.

It was then about three-quarters of an hour since the action had begun. The master decided to abandon the ship. The engineers were called up from below, and the boats were lowered under continuous fire from the enemy. Three lifeboats were got away. As the gig was being

lowered the master was struck on the shoulder by a splinter. While those about him were dressing the wound as best they could, the gig drifted away from the ship. In the gig were the wounded and helpless fourth engineer, the second engineer, two cadets, a gunner, a native fireman, and a saloon boy: seven in all.

The gig's crew began to row back towards the ship, whereupon the submarine, which mounted a four-inch gun, fired on them. The fourth engineer received another frightful injury; the second engineer had his leg smashed and other hurts; one of the cadets was hit in the arm and in the leg; the gunner was wounded in several places, the native had two wounds and the saloon boy was slightly hurt. There remained but one person in the boat, a cadet, untouched.

Those who had stayed by the master got into the boat, which was ordered by the commanding officer of the submarine to come alongside. The German informed the chief officer that he had taken prisoner the second officer, the third engineer, and a cadet, and he demanded the person of the master.

The master held his peace. The chief officer told the German that the master was badly wounded, whereupon the German took the chief engineer on board the submarine, and in his stead released the third engineer.

The commanding officer of the submarine, leaning on the rail of the conning tower, looked down upon his victims.

Crouched upon the thwarts in the sunlight,

up to their knees in the water, which, stained crimson, was flowing through the shell-holes in the planking, soaked with blood, holding their wounds, staring with hunted eyes, was the heap of stricken men.

The German ordered the boat away. The shore was fifteen miles distant. There were no more than three men in the boat who could pull an oar: the chief officer, the third officer, and the third engineer who had been released from the submarine. Without appliances, crowded together in the waterlogged boat, they made what shift they could to dress the wounded. Then they rowed towards the shore.

It was about eight o'clock when they left the submarine. They saw the submarine firing at the deserted ship, which sank about 9.30 a.m.

Before that time the fourth engineer, who had twice been so dreadfully wounded, died. For over six interminable, tormented hours the boat was adrift, the sun beating more and more fiercely upon the wounded men, who had neither food nor water, and whose hurts were stiffening, so that the slightest movement was agony.

Then an Italian rowing-boat came up, and towed the wretched men to a patrol vessel, into which they were taken. The patrol boat had already picked up the other three boats. A fireman died on the way to an Italian port, where the survivors were treated with every kindness. Afterwards they were transferred to another town, and here the ladies of the English colony tended them.

XLIX

Unavoidable

On May 30th, 1917, the steamship *Bathurst,* in company with the steamship *Hanley,* homeward bound, was about ninety miles from the south-west coast of Ireland. The *Bathurst* was unarmed. The *Hanley* mounted a gun for the defence of both vessels; she was keeping station on the port side of the *Bathurst,* about half a mile away from her. The weather was fine and clear and the sea a flat calm. On board the *Bathurst* the whole of the officers and men on deck were keeping a look-out.

Early in the afternoon, the people in the *Bathurst* saw a fountain of water, mingled with black smoke, flung up on the port side of the *Hanley,* and observed her to slow down and presently to stop. It was, of course, obvious to the master of the *Bathurst* that the *Hanley* had been attacked by an invisible enemy submarine. To go to the assistance of the *Hanley* would have involved the loss of the *Bathurst.* In these emergencies each ship must look after herself. As matters stood, the *Bathurst* was in imminent danger; and the chance of saving her depended upon the instant action of the master.

Her helm was put over, and she was kept on at full speed, steering a zig-zag course.

About half an hour later, when the distance separating the two vessels had increased to three miles, the master of the *Bathurst* perceived, ruffling the water, a track beginning from under the stern of the *Hanley* and coming to about a mile astern of the *Bathurst.* The next moment a submarine emerged, and instantly opened fire at a range of about 2,000 yards. The master of the *Bathurst* kept her at full speed, until several times shells had exploded on her decks. His ship was unarmed and she could not escape; the *Hanley,* which mounted a gun, was already torpedoed; and the master of the *Bathurst* had no choice but to abandon her. He blew two long blasts on the whistle, and ordered the crew into the boats; waited until the way was off the ship, and ordered the boats to be lowered. One of the four boats had been damaged by shell fire, and the master took the men in her aboard his own boat.

In the meantime the submarine continued her fire. As the boats of the *Bathurst* pulled away from the ship, the men in them saw that the distant *Hanley* was settling down in the water, and that her boats were pulling away from her.

The submarine continued to fire at the *Bathurst* until she also began to settle down. Then the submarine approached the boats of the *Bathurst;* the commanding officer of the submarine ordered the master's boat alongside; and demanded information concerning both ships and their cargoes. The German officer

ordered the master of the *Bathurst* to deliver to him the ship's papers and chronometers. The master told him that these had been left on board the *Bathurst.* At this point one of the seamen on board the submarine reported to the German officer that other vessels were approaching, whereupon the submarine hastily got under way and went astern at full speed towards the *Bathurst.* She fired a torpedo into the *Bathurst,* striking her amidships, went swiftly across to the *Hanley,* fired another torpedo into her, and then went away, steering westward.

Ere the submarine was out of sight, the men in the boats sighted the smoke of two vessels coming swiftly towards them from the eastward, and soon afterwards two patrol boats hove into view, passed the boats at full speed, and went on in pursuit of the submarine, firing as they went.

It was then about four o'clock in the afternoon. The men in the boats saw the *Bathurst* sink, and shortly afterwards saw the *Hanley* go down also. The master of the *Bathurst* ordered sail to be set on the boats, and the course to be set towards the land. The men in the boats of the *Hanley* were left behind for the time being. Soon afterwards they were picked up by the patrol boats, which afterwards picked up the boats of the *Bathurst.*

L

Quite O. K.

The report of the master of the *Miniota* deserves to be recorded in his own words; for he owns a right English style, as forthright, terse, and idiomatic as the sturdy diction of that master of narrative, Sir Roger L'Estrange.

So here is the story of the master of the *Miniota:*

I beg leave to report that at 3.40 p.m. June 4th, 1917, in (such and such) a latitude and longitude, we sighted a submarine, bearing down upon us from our port beam, and firing as she approached. We brought her astern and opened fire in return. Finding her shots were falling short of us, as also ours of her, we ceased firing, with a view to allowing her to overtake us somewhat, and so to bring her within range. Later, finding her shots were falling unpleasantly near, we opened fire on her, and found that we just had her within range, our last shot only missing her by a few yards. She evidently did not relish taking any further chances, for she opened her broadside

to us, fired both guns, and dived. So the incident closed with what we considered vantage to us. We expended thirty rounds in the duel, to somewhere about fifty to sixty rounds of the enemy.

At about 7 p.m., we noticed that an American ship, which was about three and a half miles away on our port bow, appeared to be in difficulties. We were overtaking her fast, and on closer inspection found that she had stopped. We concluded that she had been hit, and that doubtless the submarine would be endeavouring to bring off a double event, in view of which we put our helm hard a-port, and, while swinging round to it, sighted his periscope some 200 or 300 yards away, aft of our beam.

There is no doubt that the submarine, on getting a view of us through her periscope, found herself in a false position for attack, being right under our gun. So she wisely submerged, swirled the water up twice under our stern, but did not show herself, realising that, with a point-blank bead on her, she was at our mercy.

In the meantime, our wireless operator intercepted a brief message from the American, saying that she was sinking. Concluding that there was something amiss with her wireless installation, we sent out a message for her, giving her position and saying that her boats were in the water.

However, the time spent by the submarine paying her attentions to us gave the American ship the opportunity of putting her house in order. Doubtless finding that she was not as

badly wounded as she had thought, and not being further attacked, she had started to hoist her boats in, and was steaming slowly ahead. Next we saw the submarine come to the surface some distance astern of her, and circle round on her port side, whence she started shelling the American ship, which replied. The shelling went on for some time.

The American ship appeared to be hit several times, eventually ceased firing and steamed away. So far as we could see she was not much the worse for the encounter.

The next day the American ship sent out a message to the effect that she had sunk the submarine and that everything was quite O.K. with her, so that, accepting such to be the case, it follows that the submarine, in her greed to take the two of us, lost both, and herself to boot.

I would wish to state that the morale of our ship's company left nothing to be desired. Our gunners, when once they got into their stride, were quick on the trigger, and most accurate in their fire.

Thus the master of the *Miniota,* thus and no more. He outmanœuvred and outfought the enemy, stood by his American friend, took his chances and saved his ship, all with a cheerful zest and a mind at ease. Another German shark was sent to the bottom and "everything was quite O.K."

LI

The Chase by Night

At nine o'clock on the evening of June 8th, 1917, the steamship *Akabo,* homeward bound, was about 250 miles west of Land's End. It was a grey evening, the sea running in a gentle swell from the north-west. On the forecastle head, in the crow's nest, on the bridge, aft, and along the rail amidships, men, vigilant and motionless, scanned the sea, marking every ripple and shadow. Among the watchers were four passengers, who had volunteered for duty. One man, or several men, sighted a periscope, the little black oblong hove up on the surface. As the cry went up the master had his foot on the ladder of the lower bridge. The periscope was then half a point abaft the starboard beam and about 400 yards away.

The master sprang up to the navigating bridge and ordered the helm to be put hard over. The *Akabo,* which was steaming at about twelve knots, instantly answered to the helm, and swung round until the submarine was about four points on the starboard quarter. Then, those looking out on the starboard side saw a

torpedo glide past, the swerving of the vessel having saved her. The master rang down to the engine-room to make all possible speed, and signalled to the gunners that there was a submarine on the starboard quarter.

The conning tower of the submarine emerged. Fire was opened upon it from the *Akabo,* and the submarine dived swiftly. The master of the *Akabo* kept her at full speed, constantly altering course, and, for the time being, the submarine was no more seen.

The master increased the number of look-outs, and so held on his course for nearly three hours.

It was almost midnight when a look-out aft sighted a submarine on the port quarter. The people on the bridge were unable to see the enemy, but, as the alarm was given, the helm was put hard over, and full speed was maintained. At the same moment, according to the statement of the crew looking aft, they heard the cough and hiss of the firing of a torpedo, and a few moments later, they reported that a second torpedo had been fired.

The gunners of the *Akabo* opened fire on the submarine, and the second shot exploded with a sound as of the impact of metal on metal, indicating that the conning tower of the submarine had been struck. But the damage inflicted was evidently not serious, for the look-out aft continued to report from time to time that a submarine had been sighted; and at each report the master altered course in order to bring the submarine astern.

At about half-past two in the morning, the watchers perceived a rough glitter patching the smooth dark swell, and knew that the phosphorescence betrayed the hunting submarine. Then, her periscope stuck forth from the light patch about 400 yards off the starboard beam of the *Akabo*. The master once more put her helm hard over. The next moment a torpedo was seen by the people on the bridge to pass the vessel and to disappear towards the port bow. Again the swift manœuvring of the *Akabo* foiled the enemy. The gunners fired three shots at the periscope, which again submerged.

Soon afterwards the lights of the coast were sighted, and the master of the *Akabo* altered course to close two men-of-war.

At daylight the *Akabo* was met by a destroyer of the United States Navy, which escorted her out of the danger zone.

The master reports that the behaviour of the passengers and crew was admirable.

The case of the *Akabo* is an example of what can be done by means of strict vigilance and skilled seamanship. We are now a long way from the early experiences of the war at sea, when the mercantile marine faced the unseen enemy, unarmed and unprepared. We now remark officers and men owning a gun and the skill to use it, practised in the wiles of the enemy, knowing what he will do, and how to prevent him from doing it, and ready for all contingencies. The submarine shows herself at her peril.

LII

The Second Chance

When the *City of Exeter* struck a mine, she was within some twenty miles of a port on the west coast of India.

The master, acting upon the plan arranged by him beforehand to meet all contingencies, set his organisation in motion.

As the ship was settling down by the head, the master had first to secure the safety of passengers and crew; and secondly, to combine with that precaution an opportunity for saving the ship should she remain afloat.

Accordingly, he ordered the six lifeboats to be manned and lowered, and then to remain near by the ship. If she sank, the boats were to steer for the land.

Crew and passengers, numbering 181 in all, orderly embarked and stood by. The whole of the engine room staff, knowing that the ship might founder at any moment, remained at their posts below, until they received orders to come on deck.

Now when a crew have once quitted an injured ship, which may be sinking, they are at

once released from the stress of imminent danger. They definitely end one episode, and begin another, perhaps of an equal danger, but of a different danger. To ask men to return to the original peril, is to ask them to reverse in a moment the whole current of their mind, and to make a great call upon their constancy and courage. Here is one reason why it is essential to make a plan beforehand and to impart it to the crew. Their minds are then prepared for all requisite action; leaving the ship becomes a provisional instead of a final measure; and if they are required to return to the vessel, although the order needs no less courage to execute, it has the quality of the expected.

So the six lifeboats, filled with crew and passengers, lay off on the heaving sea, in the thick rain, and contemplated the wounded ship, rolling there, settling down by the bows, melancholy and alone. They waited thus for an hour.

Then the master ordered all to come on board again; and as orderly as they had embarked in the boats, crew and passengers drew alongside the *City of Exeter,* hooked on the falls, hauled up the boats, secured them to the davits, and proceeded each to his post.

The master ordered slow speed and continued on his course. There were thirty-four feet of water in No. 1 hold, and for aught the master knew, its bulkheads might give way at any moment under the immense additional pressure. Had a bulkhead burst, another hold would have been flooded, and then in all probability another, and the ship must have gone down.

But the bulkheads held from minute to minute, for the rest of the day. It was about half-past nine in the morning when the *City of Exeter* began to nose through the tropical rain whelming sea and sky. Hour after hour she crawled on at between two and three knots, and in the afternoon the master picked up the land.

By six o'clock he had anchored in the harbour, "without any outside assistance." The ship was then drawing thirty-four feet forward, and twenty-two feet six inches aft.

"I have much pleasure," reports the master, "in stating that all members of the crew, both European and native, behaved splendidly during the trying time."

Students of the affair will appreciate the conduct of the master himself, concerning which he says nothing.

LIII

Hard Pressed

When the steamship *Holywell* was approaching the entrance to the English Channel, the master sighted a submarine, about two miles away on the starboard beam.

The master was ready, the crew were ready, and many things happened simultaneously on board the *Holywell*. The course was altered, the men ran to their stations, the wireless operator sent out a message, and the gunners opened fire on the enemy. Such are the results produced by a submarine within a few seconds of her appearance. Her quarry swerves, she gets a shell about her ears, and her position is made known with the speed of lightning to all whom it may concern. Thus it happened on June 11th, 1917, at 7.15 in the morning.

The gunners of the *Holywell* fired two rounds. Then the submarine dived until her hull was under water, leaving her two masts and periscope projecting. As she was running submerged her speed dropped, and the master of the *Holywell* drew away from her. Observe now one of the incidental advantages of mount-

ing an adequate gun. The submarine, forced to run under water for fear of being hit, thereby decreases her speed from eighteen to twenty knots to about twelve.

The master, during the chase, observed no torpedo, but two of the native crew reported that they saw a torpedo pass astern of the ship.

By about half-past nine, or some two hours after the submarine had been sighted, she had disappeared.

The master held on till a quarter-past two, when a submarine emerged no more than the ship's length away, abreast of the engine-room on the port side. Here was a very near thing indeed. Over went the helm of the *Holywell,* the enemy's torpedo passed within ten feet of the ship's stern, and at the same moment the gunner fired, his second shot exploding just over the submarine. Wireless messages were sent, and the firemen below double-banked the furnaces. The submarine went under. She stepped one mast, not two; so that she was probably a different vessel from the first submarine sighted.

During her attack, the master sighted yet another submarine five miles away on the port quarter. The gunner opened fire upon her. His three shots fell short. The submarine replied with twelve shots, all of which fell short, but they struck the water no more than the ship's length astern.

The master of the *Holywell,* conversing with the authorities by wireless, held on, steering

through a melancholy and a significant field of wreckage. At seven in the evening, one of his Majesty's ships picked him up and escorted him until dark. The master went on alone until four o'clock the next morning, when another ship of war escorted him into port.

It is due to the master that his admirable organisation worked with so swift a precision that he beat off and escaped from three enemies in one day. Conceive now the extraordinary tension of the unwinking vigilance required of the master, who must remain on the bridge by day and by night, and whose slightest relaxation may lose his ship. But he saved her.

LIV

Quite Interesting

The following brief and spirited narrative was related by the master of the steamship *Haverford,* upon reporting his arrival at an English port on June 13th, 1917:

The voyage, which was uneventful until we approached the coast, became quite interesting when we saw a submarine on the surface some distance away. Unfortunately, we had no opportunity of demonstrating our ability with the gun, because our escort, which was more advantageously armed, opened fire, and the submarine dived.

About four and a half hours later, the look-out in the crow's-nest and the gunlayer aft both reported "torpedo on starboard quarter." The second officer, who was in charge of the watch, acted promptly, ordering the helm hard a-starboard. The torpedo passed under the stern, and so close to the ship along the port side that we put the helm the other way for fear of taking the torpedo on our port bow.

The look-out man and the gunner had previously been noted for their vigilance. I cannot speak too highly of the presence of mind and effective right action, at the critical moment, of the second officer.

Our escort, upon leaving us, semaphored "Good-bye and good luck. I hope you will always be as skilful and lucky in dodging them."

I consider myself exceedingly fortunate in having that skilful assistance which enables me to report our safe arrival; and I am proud, but not surprised, to report that the crew to a man maintained the best tradition of the service.

So much for the master's account of the matter. Those who are acquainted with the narratives of the Elizabethan seamen will recognise the right English ring of the same metal. We had thought the trick of it was lost, and marvelled at the Elizabethan accomplishment. But now it seems that the old fire was but smothered under the ashes of modern commercialism, dead to all but money-making; that the business of shoving a ship from port to port and back again to make profits for shareholders, had killed the spirit of the sea. But when it comes to fighting, and the huckster takes second place, the ancient pride shines forth again.

The master of the *Haverford* says nothing of the five hours' vigil between the first attack and the second. Only those who have stood on deck, staring at the troubled and secret water, know in what the stress consists. If it were always possible to sight the enemy before he attacked, or even to sight the torpedo, the suspense would be strain enough. But the watchers know that the ship may be struck at any moment, without a premonitory sign.

LV

Short and Sharp

Early in the morning of June 12th, 1917, the steamship *Quillota,* approaching the entrance to the English Channel, was firing steadily at a long, low, humped target some six miles distant. It was a large submarine; from her belched flame and smoke, and her projectiles, striking the sea astern of the *Quillota,* threw up white fountains. The guns crashed, the ship shook as she sped, and the fountains danced in her wake, for a wild ten minutes. Then the gunner of the *Quillota* saw his target diminish and presently disappear. The submarine had dived. The *Quillota* was untouched.

Presently, the master descried three boats adrift and full of people, all that was left of some tall ship. The first duty of a master in times of piracy is, not to save others but, to save his ship. For all the master of the *Quillota* knew, a submarine was lurking near the boats, ready to fire a torpedo into the *Quillota* did she stay to pick them up. Such is the custom of the pirates.

So the master of the *Quillota* had no choice but to hold on. He sent a wireless message; received an answer; and presently two of his Majesty's ships came foaming along. They

picked up the boats, and one of them came after the *Quillota* and escorted her upon her way.

Here is an instance of the whole organisation working to the defeat of the enemy. The submarine is beaten off by gun-fire; the ship, escaping, avoids a trap, and calls for succour, which promptly arrives.

The affair of the *Indian* is another affair of successful tactics. She also was approaching the entrance to the Channel, early in the morning of June 12th, 1917. There was a radiant sky, with a southerly wind, and all on deck were keeping a strict look-out.

The master descried among the sparkling, luminous run of sea, a patch or stain. The helm was put over and the emergency signal rung down to the engine-room. As the ship went about the master saw the trail of a torpedo lengthening from the piece of discoloured water. It was travelling directly towards the position occupied by the ship before the helm was put over, and passed astern of her.

The gunners, looking out aft, presently sighted the submarine emerging some three miles away, and opened fire upon her. The enemy fired in return, then, dropping swiftly astern, was speedily lost to view.

The master sent a wireless message, and held on. After about an hour, a vessel of the United States Navy hove into view, went by at full speed and presently disappeared.

The master of the *Indian* heard the distant sound of firing.

LVI

Mixing It

When the master of the *Palma,* on the afternoon of June 18th, 1917, sighted the track of a torpedo, the ship was off the north coast of Ireland. He put the helm over and stopped the port engine. The torpedo, which, approaching the starboard beam, must have been fired from an invisible submarine from starboard, passed close under the stern of the ship. At the same moment, while the ship was swinging to her helm, the master saw a periscope away to port and coming towards the vessel, indicating a second submarine. She fired a torpedo, which also passed under the stern of the *Palma.* Here, then, was a double attack.

The next moment, the periscope of the submarine coming towards the port side passed under the stern so close to the rudder that the gunners stationed aft told the master they could have hung their caps on it. In the meantime, the submarine which had fired a torpedo from the starboard side fired a second torpedo as she steered for the ship, and then met the port side submarine under the *Palma's* stern. The mas-

ter thinks that they must have collided with each other.

While the two submarines were entangled under the stern of the *Palma,* the three torpedoes they had discharged were plunging about in her wake.

So close under the stern were the submarines that the gunners stationed aft in the *Palma* could not at first depress the gun low enough to get the sights on them; then, as the ship went forward and the submarines dropped astern, the gunners opened fire on them. For the first few rounds they sighted on the hull of one submarine, which then disappeared. After the sixth round nothing was visible. Nor was the *Palma* again troubled.

Here was a double attack smartly defeated, with what seems to have been loss to the enemy. The manœuvre by means of which the two submarines, by simultaneously attacking, one on either side of the ship, proposed to ensure her destruction, was frustrated by the master's prompt use of helm and engine.

LVII

Short and Sweet

On June 20th, 1917, the *Valeria* was in the danger zone off the west coast of Ireland. It was three o'clock in the morning. In the colourless light of the dawn heralding sunrise, the sea was heaving in a long slow swell. The master and the second officer were on watch. There came a shock that vibrated throughout the ship; the second officer, leaning over the starboard rail of the bridge, shouted to the master, who ran across the bridge from the port side. Both officers looked down upon a troubled patch of water, whence, with a hissing sound and a pungent odour, there streamed the burnt gas from the exhausts of a submarine.

As the ship, steaming at eleven knots, drew clear of the rising submarine, the gunners stationed aft rang through to the bridge, signalling that they had sighted the enemy. The submarine lay athwart the course of the *Valeria,* about 100 yards away. Her periscope was broken off and she was consequently blind.

The chief gunner swiftly depressed his gun and fired. There was a loud explosion, flinging

up a fountain of water mingled with thick vapour, and the gunners signalled a hit to the master. He ordered them to continue firing. The second shot was a miss, the third struck the base of the conning tower. Then the submarine settled down and sank.

On the surface, large bubbles continually formed and broke; and the men of the *Valeria,* as the ship receded from the place, still marked the bubbles rising and vanishing; until, as the *Valeria* went on her way at full speed, there was nothing save the long slow swell of the sea, shining in the level rays of the summer dawn.

LVIII

The Escape of the "Nitronian"

When the master of the *Nitronian* sighted the submarine, he altered course, putting the enemy astern, ordered utmost speed, sent a wireless message and gave the gunners the alert. Between the time when the submarine was descried and the moment she fired was an interval of two minutes. In that interval, the whole ship was prepared, all firemen off duty went into the stokehold, and two quartermasters took the wheel.

It was about half-past eleven on the morning of June 20th, and the ship was approaching the west coast of Ireland. She carried a very valuable cargo. It was clear grey weather with a north-easterly breeze and a run of sea.

The first shot fired by the submarine fell short of the *Nitronian,* whose gunners instantly replied. But the enemy kept out of range of the gun of the *Nitronian,* manœuvring to get between the ship and the shore and so to cut her off from help.

Firing on both sides continued for twenty minutes, when a shell pierced the deck of the *Nitronian,* setting fire to some bales of cotton sweepings, stowed in No. 1 hold.

The master saw smoke coming from the hold, but as all the men on deck were passing ammu-

nition to the gunners, there was none to spare to extinguish the fire, so the master let it alone and hoped for the best. He did not know at the moment that the shell had also smashed a steam pipe, so that in any case the pumps could not be put on until the pipe was repaired.

The ship was now heading westward; shells were falling close about her, and her gun could not reach the enemy. Thereupon the master used his smoke-boxes.

A black vapour rolled upon the water; and behind that dusky shield, the master of the *Nitronian* fled with his eight thousand tons of precious cargo, fifty-five lives of men, and his great ship in which a fire smouldered. There was scant hope of escape; but there was a chance.

Under cover of the thick smoke the master held on for half an hour; and when it thinned the submarine had drawn nearer, so near that she was within range.

The gunners of the *Nitronian* instantly opened fire again, the sixth shot narrowly missing the submarine, which promptly went about, retreated at full speed, dived, and was no more seen.

Soon afterwards one of his Majesty's ships escorted the *Nitronian* into harbour, where the fire was put out. The *Nitronian* sailed again and safely arrived at her port of destination.

Ship and cargo and men had been saved by the judgment, skilled seamanship and constancy of the master, supported by the excellent conduct of the crew, of whom "the master speaks in the highest possible terms."

LIX

The Danger Zone

The steamship *Cavour,* mounting a gun, was escorting the steamship *Clifftower,* which was unarmed, home from a South American port. On July 8th, 1917, when the two ships were off the Lizard, the *Clifftower* keeping station about a mile astern of the *Cavour,* the *Clifftower* signalled that she was being attacked by a submarine. The master of the *Cavour* put his helm over, and, steaming broad off the starboard bow of his convoy, saw the enemy lying close to her starboard quarter.

Putting the *Cavour* about, the master ordered the gunners to open fire. The first shot burst over the bows of the submarine, the second close to her, and then she submerged.

In the meantime, wireless messages had been sent from both vessels. The smoke of a destroyer was already in sight; and within ten minutes, she came tearing along at full speed, eased down, and circled about the place where the submarine had been, while the *Cavour* and the *Clifftower* made haste to depart.

A few minutes later a speck appeared in the

sky, low down, grew momently larger, and presently an airship glided over the destroyer and hovered there.

That was the last the two escaping ships saw of the affair; the long black destroyer, the smoke, the vigilant silver fish floating poised, watching, in the empyrean . . . And the master of the *Cavour* observes that "there would appear to be a possibility of the submarine having been destroyed."

LX

Receiving Visitors

Here is the description of a late type of German submarine, contributed by a British master who profited by a singular opportunity of surveying the vessel at disagreeably close quarters.

She was about 150 feet in length, having one gun mounted aft, and two torpedo-tubes fitted in the bows outside the main structure. She carried a wire over all, which appeared to have wireless aerials rigged to it. She had a semi-circular steel dodger for a conning tower. No periscopes were visible. Lashed down on the after deck were a boat and a raft. She was painted light grey above the water and chocolate colour below, and carried no mark, nor number nor flag. She was very easy to handle and of high speed.

The master, when he took note of the pirate vessel, was sitting alongside her in his boat, conversing with the commanding officer of the submarine, who had just torpedoed the master's ship. She had been badly damaged, but had righted herself. The German officer, with seven men, embarked in the master's boat and ordered the crew to pull them over to the ship.

While the German sailors were about dismounting the ship's gun, the German officer invited the master to accompany him into the chart room, where the German took possession of the charts, and thence into the master's cabin.

Now the master, by reason of the effect upon him of the tremendous shock of the explosion and of some very distressing consequences thereof, had forgotten to destroy his confidential papers before leaving the ship. These were contained in a bag, and the bag was on the seat of the master's chair.

Upon entering his cabin, the master, with great presence of mind, sat down on his papers (like the miser who used to warm his dinner by sitting upon it). There he was glued, while the German officer plied him with leading questions concerning the position of mine fields, and appropriated the ship's chronometers and other articles which took his fancy. In the meantime, the master became aware that the German sailors were also pillaging the ship.

It is remarkable that the German officer did not ask for the confidential papers, usually the first demand of German submarine officers. When the German, in the course of his researches, turned his back, the master smuggled the bag of papers under his overcoat, and strolled towards the door. But the German was alongside him in a moment.

"I come *mit* you, my friend," said the German; whereupon the master loitered back to his chair and sat down again, as though in an extremity of fatigue. The German continued

amiably to fill his pockets, and again the master, as though in absence of mind, edged towards the door, and again the German was elbow to elbow with him.

Then the master tried again, and then again, and the same thing happened. By that time, the German officer, finding nothing more he wanted, suggested they should go on deck. The master, as a last resource, dropped his overcoat, in which the bag was concealed, over the chair, and so left it.

The German sailors, having placed bombs forward in the ship, and loaded the master's boat with stores and gear, embarked in her, followed by the German officer and the master. As they drew clear of the ship, the bombs exploded, but the vessel remained afloat. When the master's boat had been sent adrift by the submarine officer, the master saw the submarine, after firing into the ship, go alongside her. The submarine remained under the ship's quarter for about two hours, but at the distance his boat lay from the ship the master could not see whether or not the Germans went aboard again.

So they may have obtained the papers, or they may not. Life may be stranger than fiction, but it is not nearly so satisfactory; for what teller of tales but would have depicted the German as completely outwitted by the British seaman? Truth is an austere mistress. And yet she is kind, too; for she will have us to know that the British seaman is getting the upper hand of the outlaw of the sea, and permits us to be very sure that he will keep it.

LXI

The Master of the "Nelson"

Sometimes a name is like a flag, a symbol to hearten and to clench defiance. The smack was called the *Nelson*. She was a fishing vessel, fitted with an auxiliary motor, and mounting a gun. Her master wrote R.N.R. after his name.

Upon an August afternoon, he shot the trawl and put the *Nelson* on the port tack. Then he went below to pack fish, leaving a hand on deck who was busy cleaning fish for to-morrow's breakfast.

Presently the master, returning to the deck, sighted a distant craft, stared at it intently, sent for his glasses, and stared at it again. Then he sang out:

"Clear for action! Submarine!"

A shell struck up a fountain about a hundred yards away on the port bow. The man who was cleaning fish ran to the ammunition room, the engineer went to his motor, and the rest of the men let go the warp, putting a dan on the end of it in order to be able to pick up the trawl afterwards. The master took the helm.

The distant submarine continued to fire. The *Nelson* was outranged, but the master, watch-

ing the shells striking near about the smack, gave the order to return the fire.

"No use waiting any longer," said the master. "Let them have it."

The gunner did his best, but his shots fell hopelessly short. The fourth round fired by the submarine went through the bows of the smack below the waterline. The master put the smack about to get the submarine astern.

At the seventh round fired by the submarine, the shell struck the master, tearing a piece out of his side, pierced the deck and passed out of the smack through her side. As the master fell, his son took the wheel. The smack was sinking under their feet.

The gunner tried to give first aid to the master, but he was beyond mortal help.

"It's all right, boy. Do your best with the gun," said the master; and he called to the second hand to send a message. The second hand wrote at the dying man's dictation, and this was what he wrote:—

"*Nelson* being attacked by submarine. Skipper killed. Send assistance at once."

The paper was attached to the pigeon, and the bird carried the news of a man's death, sent by the man himself.

The smack was settling down; there were left but five rounds of ammunition; and the second hand went to the skipper lying there on the deck and heard him say:

"Abandon ship. Throw the books overboard." He meant his confidential papers, and it was done.

He was asked then if they should lift him into the boat, but his answer was:

"Tom, I'm done. Throw me overboard."

But he was so dreadfully wounded that they dared not try to move him; and they left him where he lay on the deck, which was level with the water, embarked in the boat, and lay off, waiting for the end. The dusk was gathering, and there was a great stillness, for the submarine had gone away.

About a quarter of an hour afterwards, the *Nelson,* her colours flying, went down with her master.

The rest of the crew pulled towards England all that night. Towards morning, the wind freshened and blew them out of their course. They hoisted a pair of trousers and a piece of oilskin on two oars as a signal of distress, and rowed all that day in heavy weather, and all that night until the dawn. By that time the wind and sea had gone down; and they sighted a buoy and made fast to it, and lay there until the afternoon, when they were rescued.

The name of the master of the *Nelson* was Thomas Crisp, R.N.R., and his Majesty the King was graciously pleased to approve of the (posthumous) award to Skipper Thomas Crisp of the Victoria Cross.

Envoy

In making this book, it has been the author's purpose to delineate in simple outline the deeds and hardihood of the officers and men of the Merchant Service. Out of hundreds of examples, those instances have been selected which are typical of many others chronicled in the records.

The British seaman, and not only the British seaman but the seamen of other nationalities who serve in the British Merchant Service, are to-day what they have always been: unconquerable, tenacious, silent, infinitely patient. Long before the war, the present writer, pondering upon the men of the sea, dreamed of a time when they should enter upon their part of that heritage of wealth which for centuries they have toiled and endured, sweated and frozen, to get for others; when they should earn share as well as wage, and be sure of steady and highly-paid employment in well-found ships, and a snug pension when their seafaring days are done.

The sea service should be, but is not, a chief pride of England. Upon the sea service she should delight to lavish care and bounty. Now that her hoards of money have been taken away

from her, perhaps England may discern with a purged vision the things that belong to her honour.

The merchant seaman in the war has proved his title to praise and to his part in wealth. But he did that long ago. Now he has proved it again. But, unless the present writer is mistaken, the merchant seaman has now learned what is his due, and when the time comes he will refuse to be put off, and will claim it. But there should be no need to make the demand. . . .

For now is the time to establish the Imperial Transport Service, in which the State and the shipowner make common cause.

There is a road runs broad from the docks into the heart of the East End, and that is the road the seaman walks when he lands in Port of London. The deck-hands and the firemen tramp along the foul pavement, feeling the whole earth solid under their boot-soles because it does not lift to the sea, with their pockets full of money, and their hearts burning with the lust of life known to the wandering exile. So they come to a place where two roads meet; a place of squalid shops and foreign smells and filthy public-houses, infamous kens and the trulls of the causeway. The money is out in a week, sometimes in a night, and the man is lucky if his head be not broken, and then he signs on once more. And that is what Port of London does for the merchant seaman.

But happily that is not all. For, at that place where the two roads meet, the British and For-

eign Sailors' Society has built a home for the men. It is an example and a beginning. If London did what London ought to do, her governors would abolish some square miles of festering, wicked private property and build a new Sailor Town. Why not? And why not do the same in every port?

In conclusion, the present writer desires to express his gratitude to those naval officers at the Admiralty who, in the midst of their own unremitting labours, have so courteously and kindly helped him in his task.

L. C. C.

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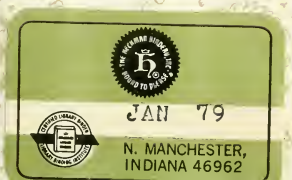
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